Save the Children

DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

UGANDA REFUGEE RESILIENCE INITIATIVE (URRI) PROGRAM

GENDER & POWER ANALYSIS IN URRI DISTRICTS:

(Yumbe, Moyo, Obongi, Terego, Koboko, and Madi-Okollo, Adjumani, Lamwo and Kyegegwa)

Final Report

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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
AVSI	Association of Volunteers in International Service
CEFORD	Community Empowerment for Rural Development
CFMs	Collaborative Forest Management groups
CFPU	Child and Family Protection Unit
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DCA	Danish Church Aid
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ENRM	Environmental Natural Resources Management
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FHH	Female Headed Household
GAP	Gender and Power Analysis
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HH	Household Head
IDIs	In-Depth Interviews
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IPs	Implementing Partners
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KRC	Kabarole Research Centre
LC1	Local Council One
MHH	Male-Headed Household
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
OPDs	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PALM Corps	Promoters of Agriculture and Market Linkages
PICOT	Partners in Community Transformation
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities
REAL Fathers	Responsible, Engaged, and Loving Fathers
RWCs	Refugee Welfare Councils
SACCOs	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations
SASA!	Start Awareness Support Action! (a community mobilization approach)
SAY	Strengthening Adolescents and Youth Empowerment and Rights Programme
SCI	Save the Children International
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UGANET	Uganda Network on Law, Ethics and HIV/AIDS
URRI	Uganda Refugee Resilience Initiative
U-RIL	Uganda Response Innovation Lab
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WVU	World Vision Uganda
YSAT	Youth Social Advocacy Team

PROJECT SUMMARY

Type of study	GENDER & POWER ANALYSIS
Name of the project	UGANDA REFUGEE RESILIENCE INITIATIVE (URRI)
Project Start and End dates **Project duration**	September 2024-December 2028 4 years
Project locations:	Yumbe, Obongi, Moyo, Madi-Okollo, Terego, Koboko, Lamwo, Adjumani, and Kyegegwa
Thematic areas	• Inclusive climate-smart agriculture (CSA) • Conservation of natural resources, biodiversity, ecosystem services, and productivity • Enhanced gender equality and women's empowerment and rights
Donor	Royal Danish Embassy-DANIDA
Estimated number of beneficiaries	• 374 community-based extension workers • 1,874 farmers groups • 50,196 individual farmers • 250,980 household members
Overall objective of the project	The objective of the URRI program is to contribute to enhanced climate resilience of women, men, and youth in refugee and host communities while promoting inclusive, cohesive, and environmentally sustainable development in refugee-affected areas.

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing
CEFORD	Community Empowerment for Rural Development
CFMs	Collaborative Forest Management groups
CFPU	Child and Family Protection Units
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DCA	Danish Church Aid
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ENRM	Environmental Natural Resources Management
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GAP	Gender and Power Analysis
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IDIs	In-Depth Interviews
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KRC	Kabarole Research Centre
Lot 1	Yumbe, Obongi and Moyo
Lot 2	Madi-Okollo, Terego and Koboko
Lot 3	Lamwo and Adjumani
Lot 4	Kyegegwa
OPDs	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PALM Corps	Promoters of Agriculture and Market Linkages
PICOT	Partners in Development, and the Centre for Holistic Transformation
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities
RWCs	Refugee Welfare Councils
SAY	Strengthening Adolescents and Youth
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of the URRI Gender and Power Analysis (GAP) is to provide a deeper understanding of specific gender inequalities, bringing out nuances, contextualised insights and solutions from men, women and youth, households and the communities. The findings and recommendations will support the development of a gender action plan to strengthen URRI project implementation by strategically adapt intervention activities to close the inequalities, transform unequal power relations, and advance gender equality and social justice.

This GAP adopted a non-experimental concurrent mixed-methods design that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The GAP was guided by the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework, which provides a consistent lens for analysing power asymmetries, exclusion, and potential areas for transformation. The quantitative strand enlisted a total of 816 respondents, including 275 males from MHHs, 235 females from MHHs and 306 females from FHHs, were interviewed. The survey covered all nine project-supported districts, with at least 80 households sampled in each district. A total of 54 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted, with 6-8 participants each. These include 27 FGDs were conducted with females (9-female adolescents (15-17 years), 9-Young women (18-30 years) and 9-Adult females (31 years and above). Similarly, 27 FGDs were conducted with males (9-male adolescents (15-17 years), 9-Young men (18-30 years) and 9-Adult males (31 years and above). A total of 9 individuals with disabilities (PWDs) were selected to participate in IDIs. A total of 34 KIIs were conducted with selected participants in all study districts. Findings from the intersectional quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics-frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were integrated with qualitative analysis' (thematic, content, narrative) insights to provide a comprehensive, triangulated evidence base for identifying barriers, opportunities, and transformative strategies to inform URRI's Gender Action Plan and adaptive programming.

Results:

Knowledge and uptake of climate adaptation practices: Knowledge of key CSA practices remains low (39.5%), particularly among refugees, women, and persons with disabilities. For instance, knowledge of sustainable environmental management practices is somewhat higher among men (23.6%) compared to women (17.0%). Where CSA interventions have been adopted, the common ones include the use of drought-resistant crops, intercropping, organic composting, small-scale water harvesting, tree planting, and soil conservation. However, systemic barriers persist for women and youth's participation and control over resources with limited access to irrigation infrastructure, financial capital, technology, and extension services impedes widespread adaptation.

Gendered division of Labour and time use: Across all nine districts, women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of domestic, caregiving, and agricultural work, especially during planting and harvest seasons. This "time poverty" restricts their ability to participate in CSA training and income-generating activities. In all project districts, women spend an average of 35% of their day on unpaid care work, compared to only 4.6% for men. Additionally, 25% of women's time is spent on farming activities, slightly less than the 29% reported by men. Adolescent girls are often pulled out of school to make up for this imbalance jeopardising their educational outcome and future opportunities. Over time, these pressures gradually diminish adolescent girls and women's sense of control and voice. However, qualitative evidence points to emerging changes with men's willingness to share domestic chores is slowly growing, driven by local leadership efforts and increased community dialogue on gender equity.

Participation and household decision-making: Men primarily control decisions about land use, farming practices, and income distribution, even in households where women have an income. In male-headed households (MHHs), 49.1% of men reported making decisions independently of their partners. Fifty three percent of women reported that their suggestions were not considered in final decisions. Women's participation in decision-making especially regarding CSA and SLM practices is due to limited

access to important knowledge with 18% of men able to identify at least three CSA and three SLM practices, compared to only 9% of women. Similarly, women time burden, limited social network, and low literacy also affects their participation in decision making. This reinforces a pattern where ultimate authority belongs to men, restricting women's autonomy in adopting climate-resilient practices. Men continue to dominate community leadership roles, and 45.5% of respondents reported low female attendance in community meetings, especially in Adjumani and Lamwo, where 71.4% noted limited female participation. Nonetheless, women are active in local groups, with 100% of respondents indicating membership in at least one community group with, and 42% of women and 50.9% of men reporting leadership roles. Participation is even lower among refugee women, with only 33.8% in leadership roles compared to 45.4% among host community women. Discussions revealed that men often hold key leadership roles, and older males mainly lead farmer and environment-related committees, showing that marginalization in leadership is influenced by both gender and age.

Access to and control over productive assets: Men hold primary control over key productive assets such as land, livestock, and financial resources. A notable gender disparity exists based on household headship: 24.0% of female-headed households (FHHs) reported insufficient access to land, compared to 13.2% of MHHs. Among refugee households, this gap widens significantly, with 63.1% of FHHs reporting insufficient land access versus 41.1% of MHHs. In addition, MHHs were significantly more likely to have received information about CSA, sustainable environmental practices, or early warning systems in the past 12 months (39.0%) compared to FHHs (28.1%). Multiple intersecting factors hinder women's access to such information, including; time poverty, low literacy levels, limited mobility, gender biases by extension workers. Similarly, women face significant barriers in accessing public spaces and services due to restrictive social norms, mobility constraints, and competing household responsibilities. Time poverty was the most cited challenge (66.7%), followed by low literacy (24.2%), which also limited their access to climate-related information and training opportunities.

A strong sense of aspirations and dreams for economic independence and livelihoods*:* Across all districts, there is a remarkable sense of optimism and aspiration especially among women, youth, and individuals with disabilities. Participants expressed a strong desire for greater economic independence, personal dignity, and a brighter future for themselves and their families. For many, the aspiration to own a small business or expand agricultural ventures is viewed as a vital stepping stone toward breaking free from poverty and becoming self-reliant. Additionally, aspirations for education and professional growth hold immense significance, particularly among young individuals.

Gender norms and sexual and reproductive health rights: Throughout all study districts, deeply entrenched patriarchal norms often reinforced by elders, community leaders, and sometimes even health providers, influence how decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health are made within households. Married women, in particular, are expected to seek explicit permission from their husbands before accessing services such as contraception, HIV testing, or antenatal care. Similarly, adolescent girls and young women face significant constraints, fearing that seeking health independently will be perceived as promiscuity or disrespect, which may lead to stigma or even violence. In addition, several barriers including provider attitudes, facility design, physical distance, unreliable supplies, social norms, and fear of stigma, which all contribute to an eroded public confidence in the healthcare system. Findings for example reveal that Some health care professionals exhibit judgmental or dismissive attitudes especially when interacting with vulnerable groups, such as adolescents, unmarried women, and PWDs, youth-friendly and confidential spaces are limited and service is unreliable with stock-outs such as frequent shortages of family planning supplies; contraceptives, HIV testing kits, and essential medications.

Violence against women and girls: GBV remains pervasive across all communities with a general understanding that GBV can be privately handled to protect the image of the family and the home of those affected. In the past 12 months, 42.8% of respondents reported incidents of physical violence

against women, while 47.2% cited emotional abuse. Alarmingly, 24.3% of respondents justified violence under certain conditions, with 16.8% endorsing physical punishment for reasons such as a woman leaving the house without permission. Women and girls, particularly adolescent girls, female-headed households, and PWDs are at heightened risk. The risks intensify during climate-induced shocks, where scarcity of food, water, and income triggers domestic tensions and exposes women to exploitation and abuse, especially when traveling long distances for basic resources.

Recommendations

1. Knowledge and adoption of CSA and environmental management practices are low across the URRI districts, with notable gender disparities. Therefore, integrating targeted gender-transformative activities (that address unequal power relations, access to and control over resources) can enhance access to CSA and environmental management knowledge, information, technologies, and services. There is need to integrate gender transformative and social inclusion guidelines in activities aimed at strengthening local governance structures' capacity to effectively engage in natural resource and ecosystem protection, restoration, and management. GESI activities can facilitate the process of ensuring that women, youth, PwDs, and refugees equitably and meaningfully engage in natural resource and ecosystem protection, restoration, and management.
2. Across all URRI districts, women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic, caregiving, and agricultural labor, which limits their access to CSA and environmental management trainings, income-generating activities, and leadership opportunities. Therefore, it is necessary to build on lessons learned from implementing male engagement strategies. Lessons can be drawn from programs successfully implemented in Uganda such as REAL Fathers, and Transforming Masculinities to foster shared caregiving, joint decision-making, and positive masculinity.
3. Decision-making on land use, farming practices, and income remains largely male-dominated. Limited CSA and environmental management knowledge, time poverty, restricted mobility, and limited literacy reinforce women's exclusion. Therefore, there is need to enhance women's agency and leadership in household and community decision-making through targeted gender-transformative activities that address power imbalances and inequalities in access to and control over resources. Such activities can benefit from models that are strong at power analysis and addressing harmful social and gender norms such as the SASA! Model.
4. GAP findings show that men dominate control over critical productive assets, including land, livestock, finance, and agri-technologies. Therefore, there is a need to address gendered barriers in asset access and control by designing and implementing gender-transformative interventions aimed at increasing women's direct ownership, decision-making power, and use of knowledge, technologies, and finances across CSA, market, and environment management systems.
5. Across all URRI districts, women, youth, and persons with disabilities consistently express strong aspirations for economic independence, self-determination, and personal dignity. There is a need to unlock the economic potential of women, youth, and PwDs by translating these aspirations into viable, sustainable livelihoods through capacity building, inclusive financing, market access, and skills development initiatives.
6. The GAP also reveals that patriarchal norms influence decision-making about sexual and reproductive health within households. Other barriers including negative provider attitudes toward adolescents, unmarried women, and PwDs, limited youth-friendly spaces, inaccessible facilities, long distances, unreliable supply chains, and social norms limit equitable SRHR access in URRI districts. Therefore, there is need to engage service providers to build their capacity to adopt gender and social inclusion approaches that address provider attitudes and social norms.
7. Harmful social and cultural norms, like GBV tolerance, early marriage, and restrictive gender roles, persist in URRI-targeted communities. Therefore, there is a need to adapt approaches that have proven effective in promoting positive social and cultural norms and practices and preventing and responding to harmful social and gender norms related to women's safety. Approaches such as the SASA model or REAL Fathers should be considered and tailored to fit the context of URRI project implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and context

With funding from the Royal Danish Embassy-DANIDA, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Save the Children International (SCI) are leading two consortia to implement a 4-year URRI program from September 2024 to December 2028. As the lead agency, the Danish Refugee Council, in consortium with Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD), Danish Church Aid (DCA), Promoters of Agriculture and Market Linkages (PALM Corps), Partners in Development, and the Center for Holistic Transformation (PICOT), will operate in Lot 1: Yumbe, Obongi and Moyo, and Lot 2: Madi-Okollo, Terego and Koboko. Save the Children International, also as the lead agency, will work in consortium with World Vision Uganda (WVU), Kabarole Research Centre (KRC Uganda), AVSI Foundation, Youth Social Advocacy Team (YSAT), Uganda Network on Law, Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET), and Response Innovation Lab (U-RIL) in Lot 3: Lamwo and Adjumani, and Lot 4: Kyegegwa.

The URRI program aims to enhance climate resilience among women, men, and youth in refugee and host communities while fostering inclusive, cohesive, and environmentally sustainable development in areas affected by refugees. The initiative targets host communities and refugees (65:35) to promote this development, including women, men, youth, children, and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). In total, the program engages 374 community-based extension workers, 1,874 farmer groups, 50,196 individual farmers, and 250,980 household members, with a significant emphasis on women and youth, who make up at least 60% of the beneficiaries.

The project is based on 3 interconnected outcome areas to contribute to the overall objective. Each of the two consortia have specific outputs that are unique but closely related as in the table below.

Table 1: Project outputs per outcome

Outcome 1: Enhanced climate adaptation and resilience for women, men and youth in refugee and host communities through inclusive climate-smart agriculture (CSA).	
DRC-led Consortium (Lot 1 and 2) specific outputs	• Output 1.1: Private and public service providers trained and equipped to strengthen and expand their provision of gender transformative regenerative climate-smart agricultural extension services. • Output 1.2: Small scale farmers (women, men and youth) in refugee-affected areas trained and supported in regenerative climate-smart agricultural practices. • Output 1.3: Small scale farmers (women, youth and men) in refugee affected areas supported to increase their participation in regenerative CSA input and output markets.
SCI-led Consortium (Lot 3 and 4) specific outputs	• Output 1.1: Increased knowledge and skills of CSA approaches among targeted farmers and Farmer Groups • Output 1.2: Improved saving capacity and market access for farmers and Farmer Groups. • Output 1.3: Women, men and youth are engaged in off-farm nature-based and climate adaptive enterprises and income-generating activities. • Output 1.4: Strengthened anticipatory capacity of communities to mitigate climate and environmental shocks which can disrupt agricultural production.
Outcome 2: Sustainable management of the environment in refugee-affected areas through inclusive interventions leading to enhanced conservation of natural resources, biodiversity, ecosystem services, and productivity	
DRC-led consortium (Lot 1 and 2) specific outputs	• Output 2.1: Local governance structures, and targeted refugees and refugee-affected communities have the knowledge, skills and tools to engage in natural resource and ecosystem protection, restoration and management. • Output 2.2: Women, men and youth in refugee-affected areas supported to engage in regenerative livelihoods activities
SCI-led Consortium (Lot 3 and 4) specific outputs	• Output 2.1: Increased knowledge on sustainable management and protection of the environment • Output 2.2: Strengthened sustainable community structures for environmental and natural resource protection and restoration
Outcome 3: Enhanced gender equality and women's empowerment and rights among refugees and host communities in relation to agriculture, climate change adaptation and sustainable management of the environment	
DRC-led consortium (Lot 1 and 2) specific outputs	• Output 3.1: Increased involvement and participation of women and youth in leadership and decision-making processes in relation to CSA, climate change adaptation and sustainable management of environment and natural resources. • Output 3.2: Positive social and cultural norms and practices promoted to enhance safety for women, men and youth working in agriculture and their access to SRHR /GBV information and services.
SCI-led Consortium (Lot 3 and 4) specific outputs	• Output 3.1: Increased participation of women and adolescent girls in leadership and decision-making processes in relation to CSA, and sustainable management of Environment and Natural resources. • Output 3.2: Positive social and cultural norms and practices promoted to enhance safety for women, men and youth working in agriculture and their access to SRHR /GBV information and services.

1.2. Rationale for the Gender and Power Analysis (GAP)

A Gender and Power Analysis (GAP) is critical as it builds upon earlier rapid assessments, such as the 2023 Gender and Market Assessment conducted by DRC in Uganda's refugee-hosting districts. That study revealed stark gendered disparities in access to markets, resources, and decision-making, especially among women, youth, and persons with disabilities while also highlighting social norms that inhibit equitable participation in climate-smart agriculture and livelihood systems (DRC, 2023). While the rapid assessment offered high-level insights that guided the development of URRI's objectives, targeting, and thematic focus areas, this GAP plays a much deeper and more diagnostic role. Therefore, the GAP aims to explore inequality's structural and normative drivers, refine the foundation of URRI's gender strategies, and collaboratively develop context-specific solutions directly with communities. This is especially crucial given the complex intersectionality of URRI's operational environment, characterized by displacement, climate vulnerability, and deeply rooted social hierarchies. The DRC assessment underscores how women in both refugee and host communities face systemic barriers to land ownership, control over income, access to extension services, and leadership roles barriers that are further entrenched by social expectations around gender roles and unpaid care work. These dynamics directly undermine the success of resilience, environmental, and agricultural interventions if left unaddressed (ibid). In addition, similar studies also reveal that refugee-hosting districts face compounded vulnerabilities where gender, age, disability, and refugee status interact to limit fair access to land, services, livelihoods, and voice (UNHCR, 2023; Bukuluki et al., 2021). Without deliberate analysis, interventions risk unintentionally reinforcing these inequalities. The GAP, rooted in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework, allows implementers to go beyond superficial inclusion and work toward structurally transforming unequal power relations across URRI programme areas including inclusive climate-smart agriculture (CSA), Conservation of natural resources, biodiversity, ecosystem services, and productivity as well as enhanced gender equality and women's empowerment and rights. Additionally, this GAP forms the basis for a comprehensive Gender Action Plan that aligns and strengthens the efforts of the two implementing consortia. The action plan will guide implementation over the next three years by aligning partners around a shared understanding of gender and social inclusion, drawing on rich community insights to inform adaptive programming. Overall, this GAP represents a strategic shift towards integrating locally grounded, gender-transformative solutions into URRI's core programmatic approach.

1.3. Purpose and objectives of the study

1.3.1. Purpose

The GAP study aimed at providing a deep analysis of gender and power dynamics in relation to URRI project outcomes; and develop a context-specific Gender Action Plan aligned with URRI goals and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles. The study examines the differences in roles, opportunities, access to, and use of resources relevant to URRI project outcomes among men, women, and youth, and other vulnerable groups, including people living with disabilities (PwDs).

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1) To examine the eight core areas of gender analysis inquiry in relation to agriculture, climate change adaptation and sustainable management of the environment (namely, the sexual/gendered division of labour, household decision-making, control over productive assets, access to public spaces and services, claiming rights and meaningful participation in decision-making, control over one's body, violence and restorative justice, and individual aspirations) and analyze how this manifest in the Ugandan context, particularly in the URRI project's target locations.
2) To investigate the strategic gender issues and practical needs of the project's target populations by exploring how intersecting identities such as age, sex, gender identity, disability, and refugee status shape differential experiences, capabilities, and barriers to participation.

3) To assess women's agency in relation to the URRI project by analyzing the aspirations, knowledge, and skills of women, female youth, and PwDs, and how these align with the project's objectives. The study will also explore potential barriers to achieving these aspirations.
4) To identify and evaluate opportunities and constraints for transforming gendered power relations and structures in pursuit of more inclusive and equitable development outcomes. This includes assessing potential risks, resistance, and backlash associated with such transformation efforts.
5) To measure the extent and influence of gendered power dynamics, socio-cultural norms, and reference groups within the project area by identifying key gender-related norms, associated influencers, potential sanctions for norm violations, and existing exceptions.
6) To identify and assess gender-based violence (GBV) risks that may arise during or as a result of the project, including the underlying drivers, trends, and barriers to service access. This also includes mapping existing GBV-related policies, available referral services, and local actors, as well as providing guidance on ensuring participant access to GBV information and support.
7) To inform the refinement of gender- and youth-responsive and transformative interventions, and support the development of a Gender Action Plan that ensures:
    - Project activities do not harm, and
    - All participants are empowered to contribute meaningfully toward the URRI project's outcomes.
8) To deepen URRI project staff's understanding of gender and power dynamics within key thematic areas, namely, Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM), and Climate Change Adaptation by examining the differential roles, responsibilities, and status of women, men, boys, and girls.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Approach Design

This Gender and Power Analysis (GAP) adopted a non-experimental, convergent parallel mixed-methods design that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative strand utilized methods such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and participatory exercises including Vignette-Based Discussions, Gender Resource Mapping, Social Norms Mapping, Seasonal Calendars, and Transect Walks. These tools were designed to unpack community norms, power dynamics, and underlying barriers and enablers that affect gender equality and participation in agriculture and environmental conservation. The quantitative strand, through structured household surveys, provided a complementary, statistically disaggregated view of gender-related patterns across the study areas. This mixed-methods and participatory approach was deliberately chosen over purely qualitative or quantitative alternatives to respond to the complex, intersectional, and context-specific nature of gender and power relations in refugee and host communities. Integrating participatory tools added value by creating interactive, safe spaces for community reflection, which is significant in exploring sensitive topics such as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), social exclusion, and aspirations. Participatory methods also allowed participants to communicate through storytelling, mapping, and discussion, overcoming linguistic, educational, and power-related barriers to expression.

Overall, this study was guided by the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework, which provides a consistent lens for analysing power asymmetries, exclusion, and potential areas for transformation. The framework helped surface discriminatory practices and multiple social identities, such as gender, disability, nationality (migration status), and ethnicity, that intensify exclusion, especially in rural and humanitarian contexts. A child-centered and intersectoral lens was applied, which is particularly relevant as the study includes adolescents aged 15–17 years. The analysis explored six interconnected domains to understand how gender inequality and power dynamics manifest across different life areas:

- **Patterns of decision-making:** Control over resources, bodies, and health; participation in household and community decisions; leadership in agriculture and environmental management.
- **Laws, policies, and institutional practices:** Barriers in ownership, inheritance, SRHR, and participation in governance structures.
- **Roles, responsibilities, and time use:** Gendered division of labour, engagement in the agro-economy, unpaid care, and leadership roles.
- **Social norms, beliefs, and practices:** Cultural expectations, religious values, stigma, and how they shape behaviour and participation.
- **Access to and control over resources:** Land, inputs, credit, information, technology, and markets.
- **Safety, dignity, and well-being**: Freedom of movement, bodily autonomy, access to services, and protection from harm or violence.

2.2. Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

The GAP utilized primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of gendered experiences, power relations, and social norms concerning climate-smart agriculture and environmental management.

2.2.1. Study population

Primary data sources for the GAP included diverse stakeholders to ensure inclusive representation of community perspectives. These included Government officials (e.g., district planners, probation officers, district production officers, District natural resources officers, community development officers, Police, Officials from OPM), and partner organization staff, community-based extension workers, leaders of Collaborative Forest Management groups (CFMs), religious leaders, and community leaders. At the community level, participants included persons with disabilities (PWDs), adolescent girls and boys (15–

17 years), young women and men (18–24 years), and adult women and men (25+ years), ensuring gender and age-appropriate facilitation.

2.2.2. Secondary data sources

Secondary data sources included a comprehensive review of existing documentation and relevant literature within the study context. These sources encompassed URRI program documents, such as log-frames and beneficiary databases; reports from the SAY program; national and sectoral policy frameworks including Uganda's Gender Policy, the National Development Plan IV, and policies and ordinances on natural resources and environmental management; national surveys and existing studies, like the DRC Gender and Market Assessment (2023) and studies focusing on gender dynamics, agricultural participation, and GBV from UNHCR and other IPs; as well as contextual literature from Uganda and comparable humanitarian-development settings to enrich the analysis with evidence-based insights and best practices. Drawing from these insights, the study tools, including the HH survey questionnaires, FGDs, IDIs, and KIIs, were developed and refined to go beyond surface-level constraints and explicitly probe for community-driven, context-specific solutions regarding CSA, GBV, economic empowerment, and inclusion.

2.2.3. Primary data collection methods

Household survey

Household surveys served as the primary quantitative data collection method for the study. Structured questionnaires were administered by research assistants who had undergone a four-day training and were familiar with the local context and who are competent in the local languages spoken in each district to a representative sample of households in refugee and host communities across the four geographical lots. The survey questionnaire captured key indicators on livelihoods, knowledge and decision making about climate smart agriculture practices and sustainable environmental practices, time use and climate resilience. The data were captured using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) methodology.

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted using semi-structured interview guides carefully tailored to reflect each stakeholder group's unique mandates, roles, and experiential knowledge. These guides were developed to balance standardization for comparability and flexibility for contextual depth, enabling interviewers to probe for clarifications and emergent issues while maintaining consistency in core thematic areas. Each guide was adapted to ensure relevance for different categories of informants, such as local government officials, technical staff, humanitarian practitioners, religious leaders, and community elders. These stakeholders are strategically positioned to provide insight into system-level enablers and constraints affecting gender equality and social inclusion, especially in climate-smart agriculture and environmental governance. Their experiences and observations were instrumental in identifying the institutional bottlenecks, policy-practice gaps, and normative structures that either facilitate or hinder equitable access to services, decision-making spaces, and program participation.

In-depth interviews

The In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) used semi-structured interview guides that provided a space for vulnerable and underrepresented individuals, particularly persons with disabilities (PWDs), to share their personal lived experiences in a confidential and respectful setting. These interviews enabled the exploration of deeply personal and context-specific perspectives that may not emerge in group settings, especially regarding sensitive topics such as gender-based violence, social stigma, restricted mobility, and structural discrimination. The interviews paid special attention to intersectionality—understanding how overlapping identities such as age, gender, disability, refugee/host status, marital status, and socio-economic background interact to shape individuals' opportunities, constraints, and aspirations. The aim was to capture how these intersecting factors influence individuals' access to productive resources,

including land, financial services, agricultural inputs, and information, as well as participation in decision-making spaces related to agriculture, environmental governance, and household dynamics.

Focus Group Discussions

FGD with female adolescents 15 to 17yrs, Kyegegwa

FGD with Male Adults, Terego

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted by research assistants with experience in qualitative research who had undergone further training for four days led by the senior research team. They were conducted using an open-ended FGD guide to elicit collective perspectives, group norms, and community-level dynamics on gender roles, decision-making, access to resources, and participation in climate-smart agriculture and environmental governance. FGDs are particularly effective in uncovering shared beliefs, perceived expectations, and contested ideas within specific identity groups, especially when facilitated in safe, inclusive, and participatory settings.

The FGDs were stratified by age and gender to ensure that the voices of adolescents (15–17 years), youth (18–24 years), and adult men and women (25+ years) are meaningfully represented. Segregated discussions helped reduce power imbalances and create comfortable spaces for open dialogue, particularly when exploring sensitive or stigmatized topics such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), discriminatory social norms, and participation restrictions. In each FGD, we incorporated a range of participatory tools to go beyond verbal responses and stimulate deeper reflection and group engagement:

1. **Vignette-based discussions:** This featured brief, fictional yet contextually relevant stories that illustrate dilemmas concerning gender roles, power relations, or violations of social norms (e.g., a woman trying to join a land user group or a young girl aspiring to be a climate activist). Participants were invited to reflect on the situation, consider their possible actions in the scenario, and discuss what the community's response might be. This process helped to reveal descriptive and injunctive norms, perceived sanctions, and the influence of reference groups.
2. **Gender activity/Time series profile:** These were used to explore and visualize how daily time use varies among men and women, boys and girls, and across other identity groups such as PwDs. The objective was to uncover gendered labour patterns, caregiving responsibilities, access to leisure, and time poverty, particularly in relation to climate-smart agriculture, environmental management, and decision-making spaces. During this activity, FGD participants collaboratively developed a 24-hour daily schedule, identifying key tasks individuals typically perform in a day. Insights from this activity have been triangulated with findings from household surveys and KIIs to inform recommendations in the Gender Action Plan regarding time-saving technologies, care burden reduction strategies, and mechanisms to enable equitable participation in URRI programming.
3. **Gender resource mapping/analysis:** Participants mapped out who has access to and control over key community resources, such as land, water sources, agricultural inputs, and credit services, highlighting disparities between men, women, youth, and PwDs. This exercise was particularly

useful in visualizing inequalities and unpacking both material and social dimensions of resource ownership and agency.

4. **Seasonal calendars:** These were used to explore how seasonal patterns influence gendered roles, responsibilities, vulnerabilities, and access to services across refugee and host communities. This tool supported participants in mapping out key activities and community dynamics throughout the agricultural year, while reflecting on how seasonality intersects with gender and social identity to shape opportunities, risks, and well-being. During FGD sessions, participants constructed visual timelines representing the agricultural, environmental, and social seasons over 12 months. The exercise helped identify critical windows when gender-responsive interventions are most needed (e.g., during food insecurity or drought), and when marginalized groups may be more vulnerable to exclusion or harm.

Transect walk

These were used in select sites to explore the spatial dimensions of gender, access, mobility, and environmental interaction in refugee and host communities through community interactions and observations across a section of the village or settlement. Transect walks were done by the researchers, guided by a community leader, along a predefined route across the community. During the walk, observations of key landmarks such as markets, water points, woodlots, farms, health centres, schools, worship spaces, and administrative offices were made. The findings from the transect walks were documented using field notes, sketches, and participatory mapping tools, and then triangulated with data from FGDs, KIIs, and IDIs.

2.2.4. Data collection and management

Data collection was carried out by trained data collectors who underwent a three-day training. The training included familiarization with the tools and procedures, and was followed by a pre-test to ensure accuracy and consistency in data collection. Interviews and discussions were done in the local languages.

Quantitative data were captured using CAPI and uploaded directly onto a KoboCollect web-based platform. Data uploads were done daily, and the data manager conducted regular quality checks to identify and correct any inconsistencies or errors. Any flagged issues were promptly addressed by the field team to ensure data integrity. For the qualitative component, interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of participants. In cases where respondents declined to be recorded, detailed field notes were taken and later expanded into full interview scripts to preserve the content and context of the discussions.

2.3. Sampling

2.3.1. Sampling strategy for household surveys

Sample survey design for household survey: The household survey was based on a stratified multistage cluster sample. Stratification was done at the district level. In the first stage, a proportional-to-size sampling of beneficiary groups[1] was taken. In the second stage, the list of the sampled groups was cross stratified by the sex of listed beneficiary[2]. A simple random sample of beneficiaries was taken from each cross-stratum. The total sample size of 816 households was determined to ensure estimates of key indicators to be within 5% margin of error with a 95% certainty and allowing for reliable disaggregation of findings at the geographical lot level, refugee-host community status, and across some key demographic groups. Overall, a total of 60 groups were sampled. The achieved sample sizes per district are given in Table 2.

[1] Beneficiary groups were defined as existing farmer groups, VSLA groups, or other community-based organizations engaged with URRI or its partners. A comprehensive list of these groups across the nine districts served as the sampling frame

[2] Within each sampled beneficiary group, a list of individual beneficiaries was compiled and then cross-stratified by their self-identified sex

Table 2: Number of households sampled per district by the sex of the respondent

District	MHH	Sex of respondent		
District	**Male from MHH**	**Female from MHH**	**Female from FHH**	**All**
Adjumani	33	15	42	90
Koboko	35	20	30	85
Kyegegwa	53	44	43	140
Lamwo	36	23	32	91
Madi-Okollo	22	39	34	95
Moyo	26	22	34	82
Obongi	13	15	47	75
Terego	25	34	19	78
Yumbe	32	23	25	80
Total	**275**	**235**	**306**	**816**

2.3.2. Sampling Strategy for qualitative data collection

The FGDs were done in the same villages as those sampled for the household surveys. The respondents were purposively selected in consultation with community leaders, community-based extension workers, and IP staff. A total of 54 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted, with 6-8 participants each. A total of 9 individuals with disabilities (PWDs) were selected to participate in IDIs. The participants were purposively sampled based on self-identification or community identification as a person with a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability, diversity in age and gender (with an effort to include both male and female PWDs across districts), and willingness and capacity to participate in a one-on-one interview. The selection was done in consultation with SCI, DRC, and partner organization staff working in disability inclusion or protection and local OPDs (Organizations of Persons with Disabilities), where available.

In addition, a total of 34 KIIs were conducted with selected participants in all study districts. Key informants included: (a) District Local Government (DLG) representatives (e.g., District planner, District Probation officers, District Community Development Officers, Natural Resource officers, Production Officers, and Gender Focal Persons); (b) Police officers (Child and Family Protection Units and Gender Desks -GBV); (c) Representatives from OPM; (d) Project implementing partners (IPs) staff: SCI, DRC, and other IPs; (e) Community-based extension workers; (f) Case managers/workers; (g) local leaders (religious and cultural leaders, RWCs, LC1s and opinion leaders); (h) WROs; (i) Leaders of Collaborative Forest Management groups (CFMs).

Below is the distribution of the sample size

Table 2: Sample size for qualitative interviews

Districts	KIIs (DLGs, IPs, CBOs, Local leaders)	IDIs (PwD)	FGDs						
			Total	Adolescent females (15-17 years)	Adolescent males (15-17 years)	Young women (18-24)	Young men (18-24)	Adult women (25+ years)	Adult men (25+ years)
Moyo	4	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Yumbe	4	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Obongi	4	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Madi Okollo	3	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Terego	3	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Koboko	4	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lamwo	4	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adjumani	4	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kyegegwa	4	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	**34**	**9**	**54**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**

2.4. Data Analysis and Reporting

A data analysis plan for both quantitative and qualitative data and triangulation was developed and shared with the project team before analysis.

2.4.1. Quantitative data analysis

Survey data was downloaded from an online database and transferred to Stata v15 for comprehensive statistical analysis. The quantitative data analysis proceeded through the following steps:

- Data cleaning and preparation: Raw datasets were cleaned to correct for missing values, logical inconsistencies, and outliers. Variables were appropriately labelled, and derived variables were constructed where necessary.
- Descriptive statistics: Initial analysis involved calculating frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to describe the distribution of key variables such as demographic characteristics, access to resources, participation in agriculture and environmental management activities, and perceptions of safety and well-being.
- Intersectionality analysis: A layered disaggregation strategy was employed to explore intersectional differences across gender (male and female).

Findings from the quantitative analysis were integrated with qualitative insights to provide a comprehensive, triangulated evidence base for identifying barriers, opportunities, and transformative strategies to inform URRI's Gender Action Plan and adaptive programming.

2.4.2. Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data analysis for the URRI Gender and Power Analysis employed thematic, content, narrative, and intersectional analysis to understand gender norms, roles, power relations, and social structures shaping participation in agriculture, climate resilience, and natural resource management. Data through FGDs, KIIs, and PAR tools was transcribed and notes typed. The analysis process involved several stages:

- Audio recordings from FGDs, KIIs, and IDIs were transcribed verbatim directly into English. Field notes from participatory exercises and transect walks will be organized systematically.
- Using a codebook developed based on the study objectives, research questions, and the guiding framework (GESI), qualitative data was coded manually and supported by qualitative data analysis software—Dedoose. Themes were generated both deductively (guided by frameworks) and inductively (emerging from participant narratives).

Thematic narratives were richly illustrated with direct quotations from participants (disaggregated by gender, age, disability status, and refugee/host identity) to reflect community voices.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

The research protocol and tools were reviewed and approved by CLARKE International University-Research Ethics Committee before data collection commenced. The study also sought approval from relevant district authorities before collecting data. Ethical and safeguarding considerations was strongly considered during this assessment, including respect and confidentiality. Anonymity, privacy, and data security was ensured, particularly during data collection, analysis, storage, and reporting. All individuals involved in conducting this assignment underwent an orientation on Save the Children's Child Safeguarding and PSEA policies and signed related Codes of Conduct. These protocols were reinforced during fieldwork to ensure children and adults are protected from any form of exploitation or harm. Parental/guardian consent and adolescent assent was obtained for adolescents 15-17 years.
Therefore, all researchers were trained to adhere to national regulations over the conduct of human-subjects research. see:
https://www.uncst.go.ug/files/downloads/Human%20Subjects%20Protection%20Guidelines%20July%202014(1).pdf, Also see https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/2020-international-compilation-of- human- research-standards.pdf).

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Sample Characteristics

3.1.1. Sample characteristics of household survey participants

A total of 816 respondents, each from a different household, were interviewed. The survey covered all nine project-supported districts, with at least 75 households sampled in each district. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents were heads of households.

Sex of respondents: Sixty-six percent of the sample was constituted by women (Table 3.1).

Marital status and age: Most respondents (71.3%) were married or cohabiting, though this proportion was notably higher among men (86.9%) than among women (63.4%). The average age of respondents was 39.8 years, with youth aged 18–30 years accounting for 29.0% of the sample.

Sex of household heads: Thirty nine percent of the surveyed households were headed by women. Female-headed households were more prevalent among refugees (45.7%) than among Ugandan nationals (35.8%). Among female heads of household, a majority (61.2%) were not currently married/cohabiting. Notably, only 21.1% of married/cohabiting women reported being heads of their household. Of all the 541 interviewed, 42.7% (n=231) were from male-headed households.

Table 3.1: Household survey sample demographics

	Lot 1			Lot 2			Lot 3		Lot 4	All
	Moyo	Obongi	Yumbe	Koboko	Madi-Okollo	Terego	Adjumani	Lamwo	Kyegegwa	All
n	**83**	**75**	**80**	**85**	**95**	**78**	**90**	**91**	**140**	**816**
Sex of respondent										
Male	31.3	17.3	40.0	41.2	23.2	32.1	36.7	39.6	37.9	33.7
Female	68.7	82.7	60.0	58.8	76.8	67.9	63.3	60.4	62.1	66.3
~~**Sex of HH head**~~										
Male	56.6	34.7	67.5	64.7	64.2	75.6	48.9	63.7	69.3	61.3
Female	43.4	65.3	32.5	35.3	35.8	24.4	51.1	36.3	30.7	38.7
Respondent is head of HH										
No	32.5	26.7	32.5	25.9	42.1	47.4	25.6	29.7	31.4	32.5
Yes	67.5	73.3	67.5	74.1	57.9	52.6	74.4	70.3	68.6	67.5
Age of respondent										
18-30	30.1	44	41.3	24.7	27.4	23.1	26.7	26.4	23.6	29.0
31 - 50	36.1	46.7	42.5	48.2	52.6	62.8	57.8	40.7	51.4	48.9
51+	33.7	9.3	16.3	27.1	20.0	14.1	15.6	33.0	25.0	22.1
Current marital status										
Single	13.3	5.3	2.5	3.5	6.3	3.8	13.3	5.5	4.3	6.4
Married	45.8	85.3	83.8	67.1	71.6	74.4	71.1	73.6	71.4	71.3
Separated/divorced	24.1	1.3	7.5	11.8	13.7	14.1	5.6	6.6	9.3	10.4
Widowed	16.9	8.0	6.3	17.6	8.4	7.7	10.0	14.3	15.0	11.9
Household size										
1-3.	15.7	22.7	1.3	10.6	10.5	6.4	11.1	11	10.7	11.0
4-7.	67.5	61.3	32.5	47.1	47.4	37.2	41.1	59.3	65.0	52.0
8+	16.9	16.0	66.3	42.4	42.1	56.4	47.8	29.7	24.3	37.0
Respondent has a disability										
No	94	94.7	93.8	89.4	93.7	85.9	98.9	97.8	87.1	92.5
Yes	6	5.3	6.3	10.6	6.3	14.1	1.1	2.2	12.9	7.5
Nationality										
Ugandan	98.8	65.3	68.8	69.4	84.4	59.1	56.7	71.4	60.7	70.2
Refugee	1.2	34.7	31.3	30.6	15.6	40.9	43.3	28.6	39.3	29.8

Nationality and disability statuses: Out of all respondents, 243 (29.8%) were refugees, with proportions ranging from 21.9% in Lot 1 to 39.3% in Lot 4. Further, a total of 61 respondents (7.5%) identified as PwDs (Table 3.1 above).

Education levels attained: Fifty six percent of the respondents had attained primary education while 24.0% had no formal education (Table 3.2). A significantly higher proportion of women than men lacked formal education (30.5% vs. 11.3%), whereas more men had attained secondary school education compared to women (32.4% vs. 13.5%). These disparities were even more pronounced among refugees: 43.3% of female refugee respondents had no formal education, compared to only 15.7% of their male counterparts. These findings highlight the importance of using simplified language and inclusive approaches when communicating about regenerative climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and sustainable environmental practices.

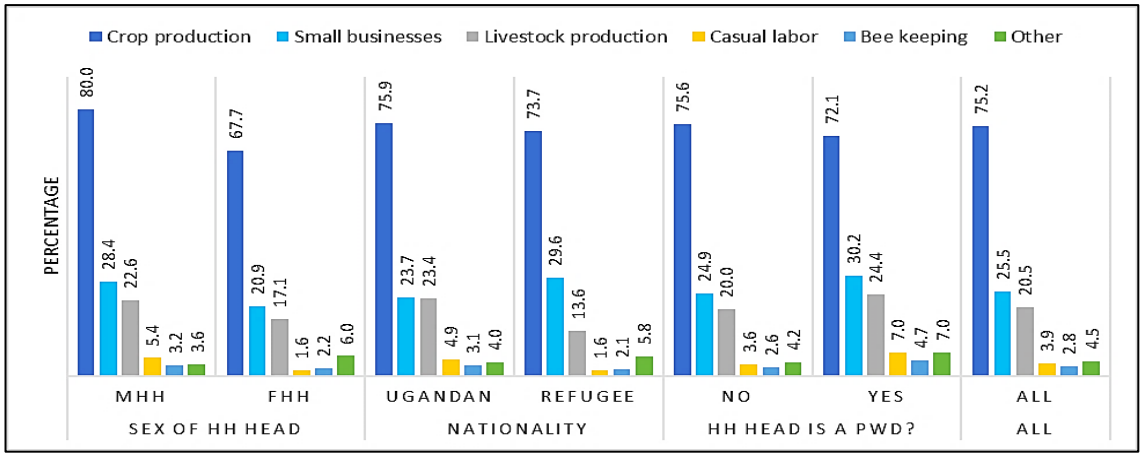
The gender gap in educational attainment widens with age. Among respondents aged 18–30 years, 16.3% of women reported having no formal education compared to only 3.6% of men. This disparity is even more pronounced among those aged 31 years and above, where 36.1% of women lacked formal education compared to 14.7% of men. These findings suggest a generational improvement in girls' access to education, but also highlight the persistent disadvantage older women face due to historical gender disparities in schooling.

Table 3.2: Sample percentage distribution by highest education level attained

	Male respondents				Female respondents			
	n	None	Primary school	Secondary school or above	n	None	Primary school	Secondary school or above
District								
Adjumani	33	12.1	48.5	39.4	57	24.6	61.4	14.0
Koboko	35	5.7	68.6	25.7	50	32.0	58.0	10.0
Kyegegwa	53	13.2	62.3	24.5	87	34.5	50.6	14.9
Lamwo	36	16.7	38.9	44.4	55	30.9	47.3	21.8
Madi-Okollo	22	9.1	31.8	59.1	73	24.7	60.3	15.1
Moyo	26	0.0	65.4	34.6	56	21.4	58.9	19.6
Obongi	13	15.4	69.2	15.4	62	32.3	59.7	8.1
Terego	25	8.0	48.0	44.0	53	32.1	54.7	13.2
Yumbe	32	18.8	71.9	9.4	48	43.8	54.2	2.1
Age of respondent								
18-30	84	3.6	66.7	29.8	153	16.3	61.4	22.2
31 - 50	134	9.7	49.3	41.0	265	29.1	58.5	12.5
51+	57	26.3	57.9	15.8	123	51.2	43.9	4.9
Respondent is a PwD?								
No	257	9.7	57.2	33.1	498	28.7	57.4	13.9
Yes	18	33.3	44.4	22.2	43	51.2	39.5	9.3
Nationality								
Ugandan	192	9.4	58.9	31.8	381	25.2	61.4	13.4
Refugee	83	15.7	50.6	33.7	160	43.1	43.1	13.8
All	**275**	**11.3**	**56.4**	**32.4**	**541**	**30.5**	**56.0**	**13.5**

Household economic activities: All surveyed households were engaged in farming. The main activities reported were crop production (75.3%; 80.0% in male-headed households (MHH) and 67.7% in female-headed households (FHH) and livestock rearing (20.5%; 22.6% in MHH and 17.1% in FHH) (Figure 3.1, below). Additionally, 25.5% of respondents (28.4% from MHH and 20.9% from FHH) reported involvement in small-scale businesses, indicating a significant reliance on self-employment as a supplementary livelihood source.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of households engaged in different economic activities



3.1.2. Perceptions of Climate Variability and Strategies for Adaptation

Knowledge of adverse climatic changes: Findings from the household survey indicate that 99.0% of respondents reported observing significant and concerning changes in local weather patterns and seasonal cycles in recent years. This awareness was similarly high among both male and female respondents and across nationalities—99.7% among Ugandans and 97.5% among others. In FGDs, respondents voiced frustration over the growing unpredictability of weather patterns, noting that the shifting onset of reliable rainfall has disrupted traditional knowledge systems that have long guided planting and harvesting practices.

> "Currently we are experiencing change with lots of rain in March and April. We would be planting food crops but now things have truly changed. The rain comes in around March to April. It also comes in May and June. At times the sun shines a lot", — *FGD Manda Nyanzo Group, Terego*

> "In the past, the weather was more predictable. We could count on the rains starting and ending at the same time every year, so we planned our planting and harvesting around those months. Now, the rains come late or stop early, and sometimes we get long dry spells or sudden floods" — *FGD Adults males Refugees, Madi-Okollo*

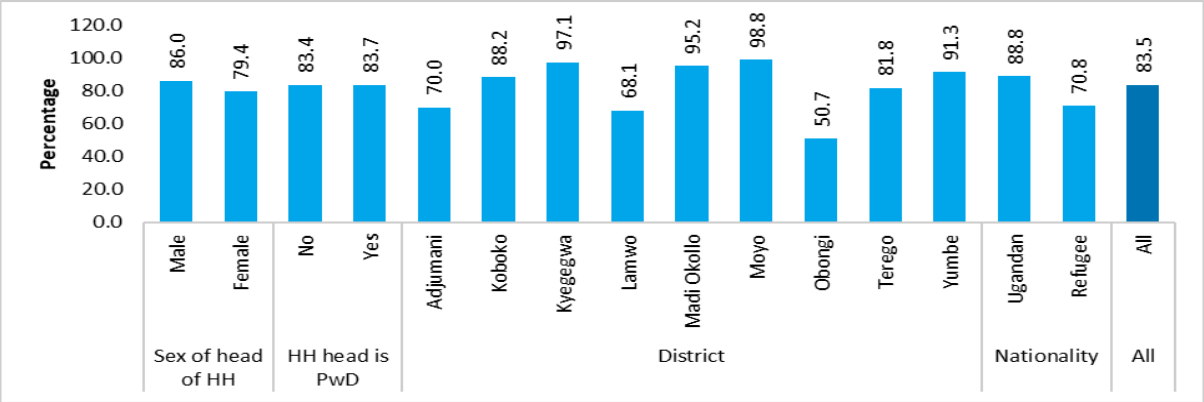
> "In the past, we knew when the rains would start and could prepare, but now the weather is confusing. Sometimes the rain comes late, or it stops too soon." — *FGD Adults Females, Obongi*

> "Women have more participation in agricultural activities than men. Then youth are the least percentage by far. Though we are trying our best to see how to motivate them to love agriculture, because that is the way to go. In the near future, with the trend of climatic patterns, I think people who are going to be heroes are actually the farmers"— *KII with Implementing Partner, Koboko*.

> "We used to plant our crops at the same time each year, but now, if you plant early, the seeds may dry. If you wait, the rains might be too strong and wash them away."—*FGD Males, Lamwo*

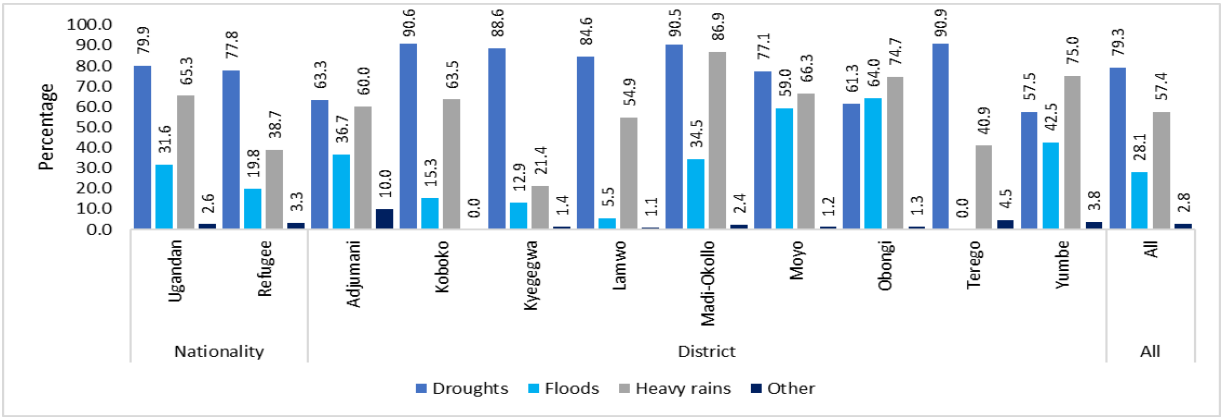
Experience and types of climate-related shocks and stresses: Across all study areas, several climate-related shocks and stresses were reported. Findings from the household survey indicate that four in five households experienced at least one major climate shock/stress (economic loss, physical infrastructure damages, or social disruptions) within the past two years (Figure 3.2). The proportion of households reporting climate-related shocks and stresses in the past two years varied across the districts and between refugee and host communities. In Obongi, only 50.7% of surveyed households reported experiencing climate-related shocks and stresses that led to economic losses or social and health disruptions, in contrast to over 90% in Moyo and Yumbe. Moreover, the proportion of affected households was notably lower among refugee communities (70.8%) compared to host communities (88.8%).

Figure 3.2: Percentage of HHs that reported experiencing climate-related shocks and stresses in the past 2 years



The most frequently reported adverse events or climate conditions were droughts (79.3%), heavy rains (57.4%), and floods (28.1%) (see Figure 3.3). The "other" category encompassed high-velocity winds that caused damage to both infrastructure and crops. Droughts impacted at least 60% of households across all districts, whereas flooding was predominantly reported in the districts of Moyo, Obongi, and Yumbe.

Figure 3.3: Percentage of HHs that reported different adverse climate conditions that caused economic or social shocks and stresses in the past 2 years



Reported effects of climate-related shocks: Findings show that droughts, floods, pest invasions, and erratic rainfall, have had severe consequences for household livelihoods, health, and social stability across both refugee and host communities. Household survey findings indicate that crop failure (reported by 85.3%) and livestock loss (41.5%) were the most frequently cited impacts (see Figure 3.4). The cascading effects of these shocks are both economic and social. For many, the destruction of crops not only implies food insecurity but also the collapse of their primary income source.

> "Back then we used to have trees which have all been cut down causing heavy sunshine as a result of deforestation. The farming methods changed and as a result the soil has been exhausted due to the constant use of fertilizers… crops can't grow and you end up consuming even the ones you had kept at home. There are also pests which attack the green crops like dodo, banana leaves. Then when the rain comes back, they disappear. In addition to that our coffee dries and the livestock end up dying due to the dry place. This also leads to lack of peace in the families."— FGD Adult Males (host), Kyegegwa

> "In Rhino camp, droughts and famine are most common from December to March, when the dry season is at its peak. During these months, our crops fail due to lack of rain, and water sources dry up. This leads to low harvests, resulting in scarce food supplies and rising market prices. Many families have to reduce the number of meals they eat each day. Women and children are most affected because they are responsible for finding food and water for the household, and children often suffer from malnutrition during these months. Refugees, who rely more on food aid and

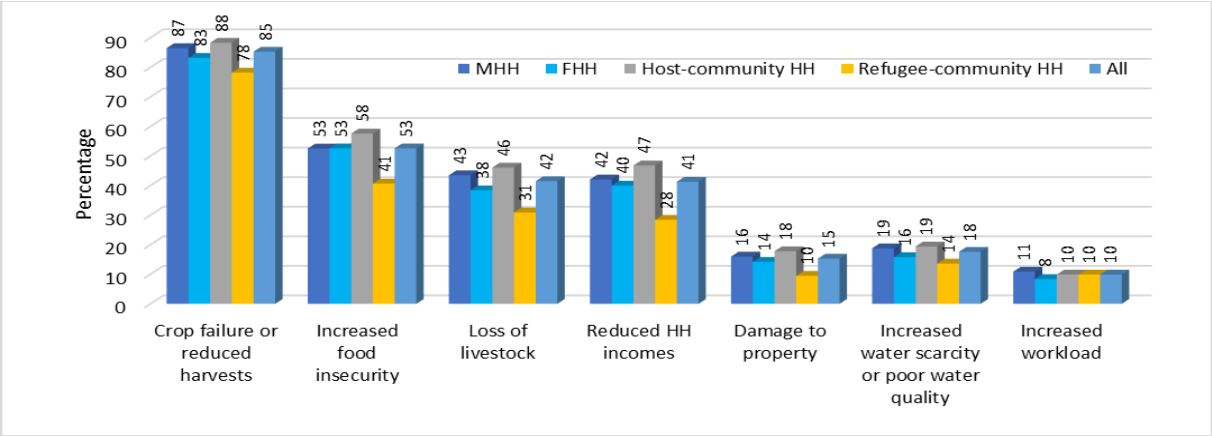
small gardens, are hit hardest. To cope, families pool resources, borrow food, or seek casual labour in nearby towns"—FGD Adult males Refugees, Madi-Okollo

"On the side of food, when there is rain, it affects cassava and maize storage. Even when drying cassava, it takes like a week. Pests also can infect the cassava and on reaching two months after planting, the floor is not good because of not drying well sometimes the pests destroy them."—FGD Adult Female 31+, Terego

There are moments that heavy downpour occurs. So, it leads to flooding where roads become destroyed, houses broken, especially those along the wetlands. Then, you realize their wind storms that destroy house roofs—KII CSO Staff, Koboko.

Beyond income, climate stresses often disrupt essential services and daily routines. Floods, which are common in April and May, have been reported to wash away gardens, damage homes, and cut off access to markets and health facilities.

Figure 3.4: Percentage distribution of HHs by the impacts of the climate-related shocks and stresses experienced in the past 2 years



Variations in impact were reported across different population groups, with vulnerable groups—particularly women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and children—disproportionately affected by the shocks. For example, individuals with disabilities often face mobility challenges, which hinder evacuation efforts and limit access to essential aid. Likewise, women—who typically bear the responsibility for food preparation, water collection, and caregiving—are uniquely impacted. These disruptions have placed a significant additional burden on women, many of whom reported difficulties in adapting to the substantial changes in their traditional roles and routines.

"What I see is that with rain, our health center is far, we walk for miles to get the services. The roads are bad and that affects transportation. Pregnant women can produce on the way sometimes. When there is Sunshine, boda-bodas can move but during rainy seasons, accessing the Health Centre is hard. It you move around, you can experience the roads."— FGD Adult Female 31+, Terego

"Floods affect everyone, but people with physical disabilities find it hard to move in places spoiled by flood."— FGD, Adjumani

"During dry seasons like December and January, it becomes difficult to get water for domestic work. Drought causes hunger and malnutrition… and it's us women who are affected most since we do most of the provisions at home."— FGD Adult Female 31+, Madi-Okollo
"It has become very hard for us. When the sun is too much, we must walk farther to find water, and when the rain is too strong, our houses and gardens are destroyed." — FGD Adult Female, Kyegegwa

***Household coping mechanisms and recovery*:** The ability of households to cope with and recover from climate-related shocks varies significantly across refugee and host communities. The coping mechanisms are also influenced by gender, age, disability, livelihood opportunities, and access to support systems. While some households exhibit adaptive strategies, the majority rely on short-term coping methods that frequently reinforce vulnerability. Some of the mechanisms adopted include reducing food intake to one meal a day, borrowing food or money from neighbours or VSLAs, selling livestock and other assets, migrating in search of casual labour (especially among men and boys), withdrawing children from school to assist with household tasks or income generation, and depending on limited aid from NGOs or the government. For instance, discussions with participants revealed that one of the most common responses to crop failure and drought is labour migration, particularly among men and adolescent boys. In Madi-Okollo and Terego, participants shared that men often leave home temporarily to seek work in nearby towns, leaving women and girls at home.

> "When drought comes and there's no food, men leave to find casual work in the townships within or outside the districts We women remain to take care of everything."— FGD Women 31+, Madi-Okollo

> "Some boys go for boda boda work or construction when there is no food at home." — FGD Adolescent Boys Refugees, Terego

Similarly, FGD participants noted that many households engage in food rationing as an immediate coping strategy. Women often reported reducing the number of meals and prioritizing children's consumption. This not only impacts nutritional outcomes but also increases tension within households and communities, especially when combined with other stressors like water scarcity.

> "We eat once a day during the dry season. Sometimes children eat first and we adults stay hungry."— FGD Adult Women, Kyegegwa

> "We stop taking porridge in the morning and keep the little posho for evening."— FGD Adolescent Girls Refugees, Terego

Additionally, borrowing food or money from neighbours, relatives, or VSLAs is another coping mechanism. However, such networks are fragile and often overwhelmed during widespread shocks. In Lamwo and Yumbe, participants noted that group savings schemes provide temporary assistance but are inadequate during prolonged droughts.

> "Our group (VSLA) helps us with small loans for food or to buy water, but when all of us are affected, no one has enough to share." — FGD Adult Females 18–30, Yumbe

> "Sometimes we take food on credit from the shops, but it is hard to pay back when the garden fails again." — FGD Adult Males, Lamwo

Communities mainly relied on seasonal rains for farming. Off-season farming is not widely practiced across districts, as most participants reported reliance on traditional, rain-fed agriculture and repeatedly emphasized the unpredictability of rainfall as a key challenge to planning both main and off-season activities. For instance, participants noted that limited access to irrigation facilities, water sources, and appropriate technology constrains the potential for off-season farming.

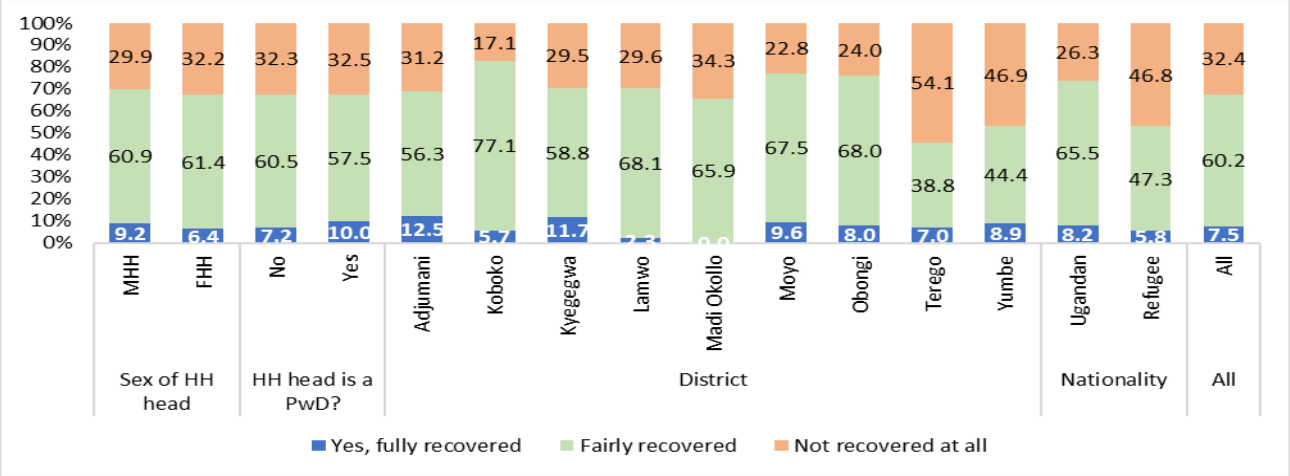
> "We would like to grow vegetables when the rains end, but there is no water for the gardens and no pumps."—FGD Adult males, Kyegegwa

> "Some groups talk about trying dry-season farming, but it is expensive and few have the equipment." — KII CDO, Obongi

Overall, based on the household survey findings, one in three households that experienced adverse climate-related shocks and stressors had not yet recovered from these shocks, signalling chronic vulnerability and limited resilience capacity (Figure 3.5). However, more MHH (9.2%) compared to FHH

(6.4%) reported that they had fully recovered. Fewer proportion of refugees (5.8%) compared to nationals (8.2%) reported to have fully recovered. A relatively higher proportion of respondents from Terego and Yumbe reported that they had not yet recovered at all.

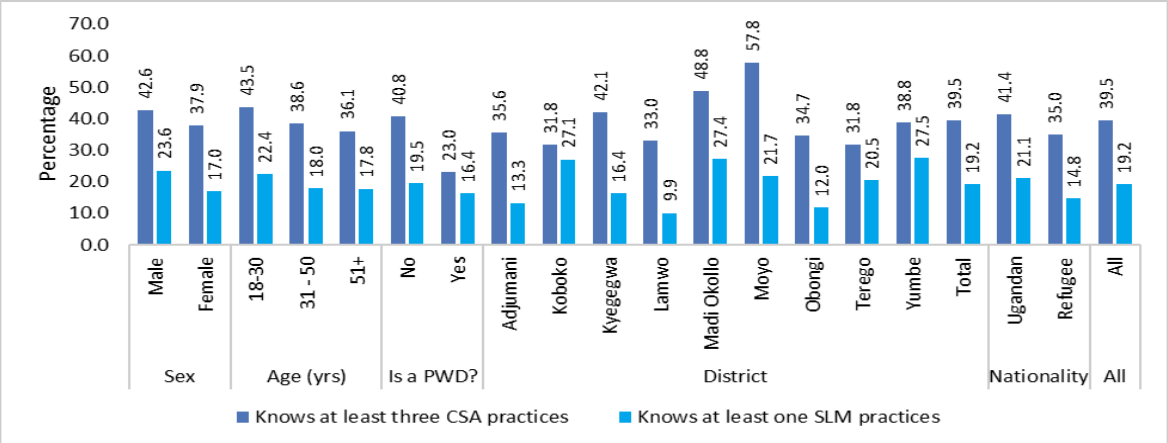
Figure 3.5: Percentage of HHs that reported experiencing climate-related shocks and stresses in the past 2 years and their recovery statuses



3.1.3. Knowledge and uptake of climate adaptation and environmental protection practices

Households across refugee and host communities are increasingly adopting informal and externally promoted climate adaptation strategies to mitigate the effects of droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall. These strategies include both CSA and broader environmental management practices. However, adoption remains uneven and is often constrained by limited knowledge, access, and support. For instance, survey data reveals that knowledge of at least three CSA or sustainable environmental management practices is low. Knowledge of at least three CSA practices was reported by 39.5% of respondents and was similar between male and female participants (Figure 3.6 below). However, knowledge of at least three sustainable environmental management practices was slightly higher among men than women (23.6% vs. 17.0%). Similarly, knowledge of at least three CSA practices was high among nationals (41%) compared to refugees (35%). In relation to sustainable environmental management practices, knowledge of at least three sustainable land management (SLM) practices were slightly higher among nationals (21%) than refugees (14.8%). In regard to disability status, knowledge of at least three CSA practices was high among persons with no disability (40.8%) compared to PWDs (23%). However, knowledge of at least three SLM practices was more or less similar among persons with no disability and PWDs (19.5% vs 16.4%) (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Percentage of respondents with knowledge of CSA and SLM practices



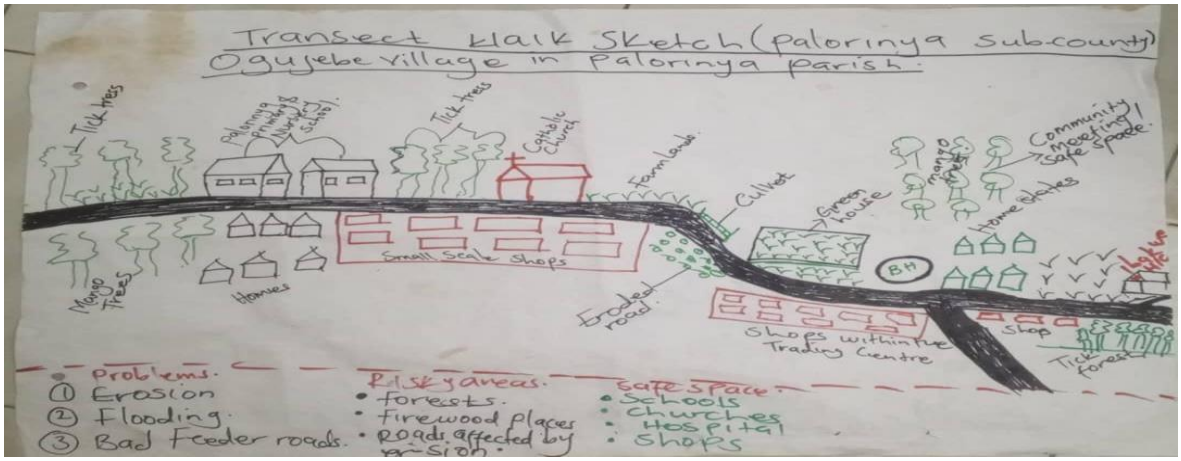
Despite the aforementioned challenges, discussions with FGD, IDI KII, and observations through transect walks with participants revealed that several communities have adopted CSA techniques, including the use of drought-resistant and early-maturing crops (e.g., cassava, beans), organic composting and mulching, intercropping for pest control and soil fertility, small-scale water harvesting through tanks or drums, and raised-bed gardening, especially in areas receiving NGO support. In addition, environmental management practices, such as tree planting, afforestation, and erosion control, have been supported in select settlements. For example, observations during a transect walk in Ogujebe village in Obongi district and Miloko Village in Koboko district, plantations of tick trees and eucalyptus trees were observed, which are crucial for both environmental management and providing shade. Additionally, in Ogujebe village, a demonstration site showcasing best practices in CSA was observed (see maps below). Similarly, in Kyegegwa, CSA practices aimed at conserving natural resources were observed. The implementation of terracing methods to control soil erosion and the strategic planting of trees by local farmers to combat the impacts of drought were noted. Environmental committees or forest management groups are sometimes established to oversee these activities and mobilize participation.

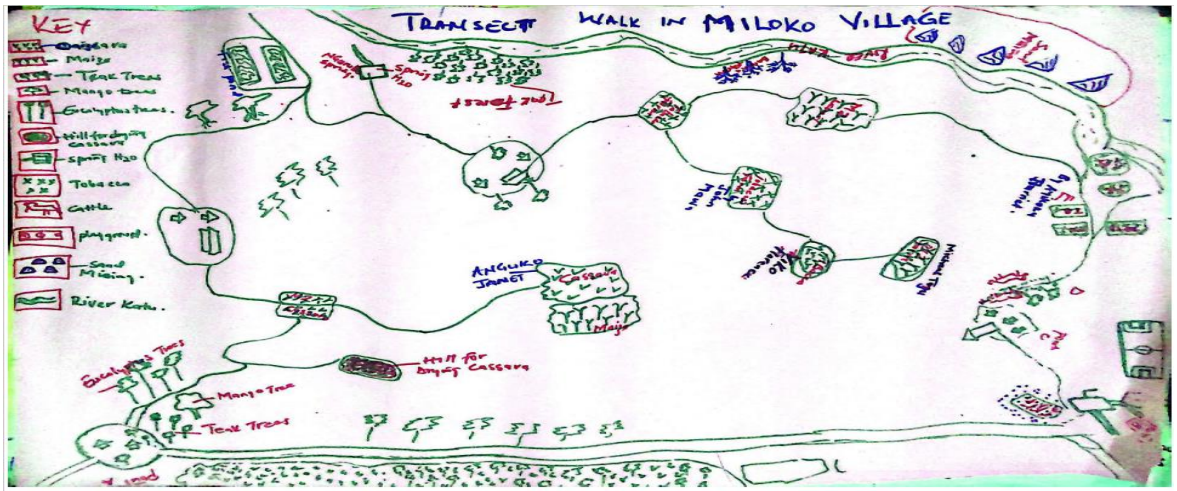
However, it was noted that many communities maintain traditional practices for land, water, and forest conservation. These include designating specific forest patches where cutting trees is forbidden, using indigenous tree species for replanting, rotational farming to allow soil to regenerate, and communal by-laws that prohibit the pollution of streams or wetlands.

> "In the past, we protected big trees and certain places because our elders said they were sacred. We did not cut these trees or hunt in those areas." — KII community leader, Lamwo

> "We have always used ashes and animal manure to improve the soil, and planted certain trees near water sources to protect them." — FGD Adult females (host), Obongi

Box 1: Transect walk sketches highlighting infrastructural resources, CSA and ENRM practices





Further discussions during the FGDs and KIIs revealed that some community members practice crop rotation, mulching, manure utilization, and the application of chemical pesticides. However, participants also highlighted a significant observation during these discussions and transect walks: practices aimed at conserving natural resources, like tree planting, are mostly carried out by men. This is largely due to their influence and control over key resources, especially land

> "The government recommended medicines for spraying pests in the garden; we usually spray our crops to prevent them from pest attacks. We also use manure but it is not common. Few people use it in this community… We practice crop rotation because it helps in regaining the fertility of the soil. We also mulch our gardens though it is done by very few members. We were all trained on it in our group garden but few people do it because they claim it involves a lot of work."— FGD Adult Women, Terego

> "We are also having a training site which is at the refugee settlement where we have established a mega resiliency design demonstration plot which will serve as a learning point for others. Then it is cascaded to the village level and individual households" – KII CSO Staff Koboko

> "use of crop rotation and planting quick yielding crops to speed up the time of harvesting and also get involved in aquaculture like fishing and also selling in the market also do brewing to earn some money"—FGD with women Refugees in Parolinya, Obongi aged 26-30 years

> "We use drought resistant crops, use of organic fertilizer poultry keeping and beekeeping more especially during dry season". "— FGD Adult Men Moyo

In the household survey, 39.0% of the households reported to have adopted at least three CSA practices, and 34.2% reported tree planting or practicing agroforestry. The most common CSA practices were early planting (53.2%), integrated pest and disease management (39.2%), mulching or use of cover crops (35.3%) and use of improve crop variates (33.2%) (Table 3.3). Adoption was slightly higher in households headed by the youth, men and Ugandans (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Percentage distribution of households by CSA and SLM practices adopted

			CSA practices adopted							
	Adopted at least 3 CSA practices	**Practiced agroforestry or tree planting**	**Early planting**	**IPM**	**Mulching & Cover cropping**	**Improved crop varieties**	**Crop rotation**	**Crop diversification**	**Using terraces/ contour bunds**	**Zero tillage**
Sex of HH head										
Male	40.8	38.2	53.6	44.0	37.0	34.0	13.8	11.4	9.2	5.4
Female	36.1	27.8	52.5	31.6	32.6	32.0	10.1	12.3	7.3	4.1
Age of HH head										
18-30	40.6	36.0	52.6	40.0	39.4	31.4	12.6	13.1	9.1	4.6
31 - 50	39.6	33.9	55.4	39.1	35.9	35.1	12.1	13.6	9.2	3.7
51+	37.4	34.2	48.2	36.5	31.1	33.3	13.5	8.1	6.8	7.7
Nationality										
Ugandan	40.8	38.6	53.4	37.9	38.0	37.7	15.2	12.9	9.9	5.1
Refugee	34.6	23.9	52.7	42.4	28.8	22.6	5.8	9.1	4.9	4.5
HH head is PWD										
No	40.5	33.8	53.6	38.8	35.5	34.4	12.5	12.3	8.4	4.8
Yes	25.6	37.2	50.0	43.0	33.7	23.3	11.6	7.0	9.3	5.8
Districts										
Adjumani	33.3	25.6	43.3	25.6	24.4	31.1	8.9	15.6	8.9	5.6
Koboko	48.2	45.9	38.8	42.4	44.7	34.1	11.8	7.1	7.1	4.7
Kyegegwa	39.3	43.6	65.7	55.0	35.7	12.9	15.7	6.4	2.1	4.3
Lamwo	26.4	16.5	40.7	27.5	17.6	34.1	4.4	13.2	4.4	5.5
Madi-Okollo	42.1	47.4	45.3	42.1	53.7	30.5	12.6	12.6	17.9	11.6
Moyo	51.2	35.4	59.8	40.2	41.5	57.3	26.8	17.1	2.4	0.0
Obongi	34.7	32.0	62.7	29.3	28.0	48.0	6.7	12.0	13.3	4.0
Terego	38.5	19.2	67.9	47.4	35.9	32.1	5.1	12.8	7.7	1.3
Yumbe	37.5	35.0	51.2	33.8	35.0	35.0	17.5	12.5	16.3	6.3
All	**39.0**	**34.2**	**53.2**	**39.2**	**35.3**	**33.2**	**12.4**	**11.8**	**8.5**	**4.9**

3.2. Gender Roles, Division of Labour, and Time Use

3.2.1. Gender roles and division of labour

Findings show that across all districts, the division of labour is distinctly gendered and influenced by gender norms that tend to dictate the roles of an ideal woman and ideal man in a specific community context. These gender norms too often underpin the usually unequal relations and access to resources as well as voice and agency between men, boys, women, and girls. For instance, in all project districts, women spend an average of 35.0% of their day on unpaid care work, compared to only 4.6% for men. Additionally, 25.0% of women's time is spent on farming activities, slightly less than the 29.0% reported by men. Project Lots 2 (Koboko, Madi-Okollo, Terego) and 3 (Adjumani and Lamwo) had the highest time burdens on women (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Percentage distribution of time use per different activities by women and men (7 am to mid-night)

	Women							Men				
district	n	Personal care	Productive time	Farming time	Unpaid care work	Social activities	n	Personal care	Productive time	Farming time	Unpaid care work	Social activities
Moyo	56	12.0	29.4	21.2	36.8	4.3	26	15.5	42.0	29.1	8.4	9.3
Obongi	62	17.7	26.0	20.7	30.5	5.4	13	19.6	42.9	24.7	9.7	6.6
Yumbe	48	20.2	24.7	24.5	32.5	1.3	32	26.5	34.3	15.1	2.9	7.3
Lot 1	**166**	**15.0**	**26.1**	**21.6**	**33.4**	**3.9**	**71**	**19.2**	**42.0**	**25.2**	**6.2**	**7.4**
Koboko	50	9.8	24.0	20.6	48.8	1.1	35	13.3	42.1	32.9	8.6	7.1
Madi-Okollo	73	9.3	28.7	27.1	32.8	1.2	22	11.9	48.4	30.1	5.6	6.4
Terego	53	11.5	26.8	20.6	33.1	5.0	25	13.0	43.1	28.8	4.0	6.0
Lot 2	**176**	**9.9**	**27.6**	**24.5**	**35.8**	**2.2**	**82**	**12.9**	**45.4**	**30.1**	**4.8**	**6.7**
Lamwo	55	9.4	33.4	27.3	28.1	1.5	36	10.1	47.4	34.9	4.3	7.4
Adjumani	57	8.5	26.6	23.8	41.8	4.0	33	9.1	40.4	33.9	7.2	7.2
Lot 3	**112**	**8.8**	**29.7**	**25.2**	**34.9**	**2.5**	**69**	**9.4**	**43.4**	**34.5**	**5.0**	**7.2**
Kyegegwa	87	10.6	26.8	22.7	36.1	3.8	53	12.8	49.9	27.2	2.4	7.6
All	**541**	**9.3**	**27.5**	**25.1**	**35.0**	**3.0**	**275**	**12.8**	**46.2**	**29.2**	**4.6**	**7.2**

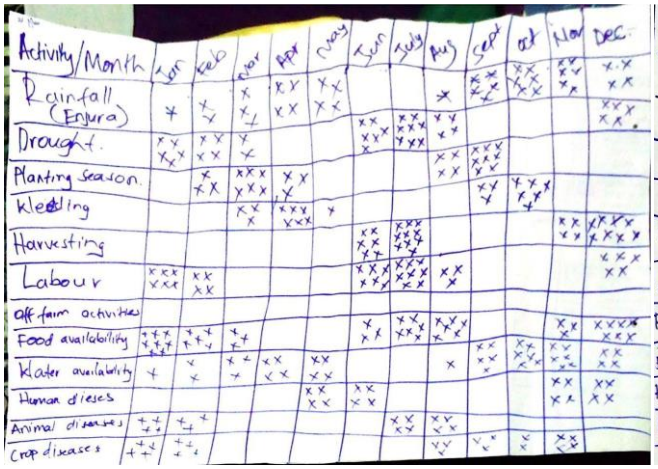
Similar results were obtained from qualitative interviews. For instance, analysis of activity profiles from various study sites ***(See annex 1)*** shows that women and girls face a disproportionate burden of care responsibilities and unpaid labour. This is especially clear in domestic settings, where young girls are often socialized from an early age to help their mothers with household tasks. The domestic chores typically performed by women and girls include cooking meals, bathing young children, cleaning various areas of the house, and washing utensils used for daily purposes. These roles too extend to caring for the sick. In addition to these responsibilities, women play essential roles in collecting water from nearby sources and gathering firewood for cooking. Their caregiving tasks extend to caring for children, which involves washing their clothes and providing comfort during sleep. While a significant portion of the work done by women and girls occurs within the home, some women have also been observed participating in income-generating activities (IGAs) outside the household. Their involvement in these activities represents an added layer of commitment as they balance domestic responsibilities with financial contributions. Regarding agricultural labour, women are vital, particularly in relation to food crops. They generally handle the majority of tasks related to planting, weeding, and harvesting, taking primary responsibility for the various stages of crop production.

> Women think more of the children than the men so they can't just leave home to go and do other activities before preparing for the young ones what to eat hence most of them first do some domestic work or even end up not going to the garden some days just because of domestic work — FGD Adult female 31 years above, Madi-Okollo

> "Girls learn early that domestic work is theirs. Boys play or help with animals, but not much at home." — FGD Female adolescents, Obongi.

> "During planting season, everyone is busy, but women still cook, care for children, and collect water." — FGD Adult female 31 years above. Lamwo.

"Now when it gets to like around 11:30-12:00, women send the girls to go and collect water for cooking lunch while women start collecting some firewood in the garden. But the men and boys continue digging until around 2pm.At 2pm when everyone has come back the women and girls serve food for the boys and their fathers and then we all sit together and eat and rest then after eating the girls wash utensils", — FGD with Adolescents Refugees Ocea, 15-17 years, Madi Okollo



Seasonal Analysis among Adult males (nationals), Kyegegwa

Seasonal Analysis among refugee males 18 -30yrs, Kyegegwa

Seasonal analysis reveals a significant increase in the workload for women during critical agricultural periods, particularly from March to October, which includes both the planting and harvesting seasons. This heightened demand on their time is reflected in the daily routines of women, who juggle numerous responsibilities. As dawn breaks, their day begins with essential chores such as fetching water from nearby sources, preparing meals, cleaning their homes, and getting their children ready for school. After these morning tasks, women head to their gardens where they engage in activities like weeding, planting seeds, or harvesting crops. Their long days do not end with their return home; instead, they transition back into household duties, preparing dinner and caring for their children. In contrast, men's responsibilities primarily revolve around fieldwork or income-generating activities, allowing them some leisure time when they return home. As a result, women experience little to no respite, enduring a relentless cycle of work even during the off seasons.

"Women's calendars are much busier than men's. From early morning, women start with chores like fetching water, cooking, cleaning, and preparing children for school. After that, they go to the gardens for weeding, planting, or harvesting. Even after returning home, they continue with housework, cooking dinner, and looking after children. Men, on the other hand, mostly focus on fieldwork or income-generating activities and rest when they get home. Women rarely get a break, even during the off-season."— FGD Adult males Refugees, Madi-Okollo

"If there are many chores for the day, it is the mother who says don't go to school and you have no option but to comply. if your mother has a small business, you go there together to help her because you will need that money for school fees, savings for the group, hospital bills. Now if the mother is sick, you have to do all the chores for example for me now my mother is sick, I am not able to go to school." — FGD Female refugee Adolescents, Kyegegwa

"There are times when there is a lot of pressure in the garden and children are not very busy at school, this is when they take a break to assist us with garden work but that doesn't happen during busy periods like when they are doing tests." — FGD Adult females, Terego

In contrast to women, men's work is typically divided between domestic tasks and responsibilities outside the home. Within the household, their primary focus revolves around various agricultural tasks, particularly farming and gardening. These activities often include preparing the land, planting seeds,

and attending to crops as they grow. Outside the home, men are actively involved in a variety of income-generating ventures. They may run small businesses, sell produce from their farms in local markets, engage in bricklaying, perform casual labour, or participate in community gatherings. For instance, participants noted that men believe domestic responsibilities are primarily suited for women. Therefore, once they complete their gardening chores, sometimes even before lunch, men typically seek a meal and then head to nearby trading centers. This notion reflects a broader societal perspective where men's roles are largely external, while women bear the brunt of domestic duties.

> “Men have a "I don’t care" attitude because they believe most domestic work is meant for women. As a result, after completing garden work, whether it’s before lunch or not, they expect food and then head to the trading centers to relax and socialize with their friends. Those who drink also take that time to consume alcohol, leaving the majority of the household chores for women and girls at home” — FGD Adult female 31 years above, Madi-Okollo

> “Men go to the market or attend meetings, but women do most of the digging and still handle home chores.” — FGD Female 18-30 years, Kyegegwa

> “Both men and women are busiest during the rainy seasons especially during planting and harvesting. However, for women, the busy period lasts longer because, in addition to working in the fields, they also have to manage all the domestic chores. Men’s workload is heaviest during land preparation and harvesting, but once that’s finished, they can relax or attend community meetings, while women’s work continues at home” — FGD Adult males Refugees, Madi-Okollo

In the context of climate change however, the unpredictable weather patterns described above tend to affect men and women quite differently; for example, as women who trek long distances to water sources during the long, unexpected drought they are more vulnerable to increased risks exposed to risks of violence in its various forms (physical., emotional and even sexual violence). Furthermore, traveling for long distances in search of water also affects the ability of women and girls to fulfil their gender roles routed in the gender norms in the household including childcare and other domestic chores. This has potential to affect relationships between couples and to increase risks of emotional and physical violence. Furthermore, moving for long distances away from home reduces time available for particularly women to effectively participate in productive and income generating activities. Therefore, the opportunity cost for coping with climate vagaries through walking long distances in search of essential items like water reduces time available to engage in alternative livelihood activities to sustain livelihoods. Similarly, unpredictable weather patterns and climate vagaries also affect the ability of men to effectively fulfil their roles as provider and breadwinner for the family. This has the potential to negatively affect relationships between men and women. Men may become frustrated for failure to fulfil their roles and may resort to violence to assert their position in the household.

Overall, while the findings confirm that women and adolescent girls’ shoulder most of the household, caregiving, and farm labor, especially during planting, harvest, and climate shocks, findings also reveal opportunities and insights from various stakeholders that could be harnessed to promote a more equitable sharing of responsibilities and enhance the inclusion of women and girls in decision-making processes. For example, FGD discussions with women and girls across several districts show that men are increasingly getting involved in HH chores especially cooking, caring for the children, collecting water.

> “Actually, there is some change; men look after children, and they cook, unlike in the past when they never did anything. Both men and women go to dig in the garden…and if a wife has gone to dig in the garden, the husband will look after the children, fetch water, or even cook food so that the wife returns when there is ready food… Let me use my household as an example. When I was called for this meeting yesterday, my husband told me this morning that I don't need to

move with the kids; he will look after them from home, which means he will cook for them and attend to them fully. Which, in the past, was never done."—FGD Adult females (host), Lamwo.

"I will say this from my personal experience, and cannot speak for another. If my wife and I wake up, she starts by preparing the children to go to school. Then I also take the goats to the bush to graze and check on the pigs. If they don't have anything to eat, I go and collect it. Then come back home, have breakfast with my wife, and go to dig together. If we find dry firewood on returning, I can carry it, and she can maybe carry a jerrycan of water. That control is in my house. Certain men say that they cannot split firewood for their wives and that if they do, their wives will disrespect them. That is why I have given my own experience, because I don't know how the other person behaves." — FGD Adult males (Host), Kyegegwa.

However, findings reveal that norms, peer pressure, and fear of being seen as "controlled" or "disrespected" by women continue to limit men's participation in caregiving and support at home ***(see details in social norms section).*** Nonetheless, findings show demand for increased support from male family members. This is particularly crucial during peak agricultural tasks and in instances of climate shocks, where sharing labor can alleviate some of the burdens faced by women and girls. Specific activities identified for shared support include collecting water and firewood, preparing meals, and supervising children. Additionally, the role of neighbours emerged as a significant factor in caregiving dynamics. Neighbours often step in to help monitor children, allowing primary caregivers to manage other household responsibilities more efficiently.

"If the men could help with fetching water or take care of the children when we are in the garden, it would be easier for us." — FGD Young woman (18-30), Lamwo

"Sometimes we ask neighbours to watch the small children so we can finish the field work faster." — FGD, Adolescent girls Refugees, Kyegegwa

In addition, discussions with men revealed a growing recognition of the constraints imposed by traditional gender roles. Many expressed a willingness to embrace a more equitable division of both domestic and productive labor. Local governments are also actively participating in these discussions and taking initiatives to raise awareness about the distribution of gender roles within the community. For example, in Obongi district, a CDO highlighted the district's efforts to encourage greater male involvement in household responsibilities, particularly during peak agricultural seasons when the workload increases significantly.

"We grew up knowing some work is for women, but now things are changing. If leaders teach us, we can help more." — FGD Adult Males (31 years above), Obongi.

"The district is encouraging communities to set up shared childcare and to have men participate more in domestic activities, especially during busy periods." — CDO, KII, Obongi

Additionally, encouraging the active participation of women and young girls in decision-making and community engagement creates opportunities for holistic development. Findings across various districts reveal that development initiatives often overlook the involvement of women and girls, especially during key agricultural seasons. For example, FGDs with women and girls reveal that important activities like training sessions and community forums are usually scheduled at times that clash with their busiest agricultural tasks or domestic duties, such as planting, harvesting, or caring for livestock. These conflicts prevent them from attending essential meetings or training. Therefore, there is a need to reevaluate the timing and inclusiveness of development activities to ensure women and young girls can participate fully in decision-making.

"Many meetings are held when we are in the gardens. If they called us later, we could attend and share our ideas." — FGD Adult females, Terego

> Men's calendars have more flexibility. They can attend community meetings, training sessions, or even rest at trading centers after fieldwork. Women often miss out on such opportunities because their domestic responsibilities are ongoing. Even if there's a training, women sometimes can't attend because they have to cook or look after children." — FGD Adult males Refugees, Madi Okollo

Similarly, discussions with male colleagues highlighted an increasing awareness of the need to adjust meeting schedules to better fit the availability of women and young people. This recognition could be harnessed to establish dedicated forums where women and girls can share their perspectives as well as organize joint planning sessions that actively involve both genders and youth.

> "Meetings can be at times that suit everyone, not just the men. That way, women and youth can be there." — Man, 34, FGD, Kyegegwa

3.2.2. Gender differences in participation in CSA and off-farm activities

Findings across locations indicate a significant gender disparity in participation in CSA training and access to critical resources. The data reveals that men are more likely to attend these educational programs, which limits women's opportunities to engage in off-farm economic activities such as poultry farming, beekeeping, or petty trading. For women, the demands of long working days that includes time spent on unpaid care work/domestic chores and the traditional farming activities restrict their ability to explore alternative livelihood activities or economic ventures or acquire new skills that could improve their livelihoods. Furthermore, adolescent girls are often withdrawn from school by their families to assist with household chores, which not only curtails their educational pursuits (including resulting in absenteeism, poor performance or drop out of school) but also narrows their future prospects attainment of knowledge and skills for employment and economic independence. In addition, while it is established that women carry a greater household burden, findings further reveal several intersecting reasons why women's participation in training programs is limited. It was noted that women prefer informal, flexible learning environments, such as learning through peers, practical demonstrations, or community groups, over scheduled trainings. This preference is driven by time poverty, where women's daily responsibilities often do not align with the schedules of training programs.

> "It is easier for me to learn from other women while we are working or in the group. I cannot leave my work for a whole day of training." — FGD Adult females (nationals), Kyegegwa

Similarly, some training programs are not always gender sensitive. They may be delivered by male trainers, scheduled at inconvenient times, or held in distant locations, which further discourages women's attendance. Social norms may also discourage women from speaking up in mixed-gender settings, especially if literacy levels are low.

> As said earlier on, women are more involved in domestic work than men and yet when it comes to attending community trainings and it's left upon them to attend so all the burden will be on the woman as they are involved in many domestic and farm works and some end up not attending these trainings or not involving themselves in these community activities — FGD Adult female, Madi-Okollo

> "My brother learned about fruit trees at a training. I wanted to go, but my parents said it was not for girls." — FGD Female adolescent Refugees, Terego

> "Some of our parents think that boys have different chores. Some activities are expected to be done by boys, while others are for girls. That's the reason why, if they send girls to fetch water, boys will be grazing." — FGD Female adolescent Refugees, Lamwo

Overall, a combination of the burden of domestic chores (including unpaid care work) and formal, inflexible training programmes not adapted to the gender and cultural context of participants particularly limit the meaningful engagement and participation of women in the trainings.

3.3. Power, Participation and Household decision making

3.3.1. HH decision making

HH decision making on land use: cross all districts, the dynamics of household decision-making are heavily influenced by deeply entrenched gender norms, which dictate authority and responsibility between men and women. Men are often seen as the primary decision-makers, particularly in critical areas such as agricultural strategies, land management, investment in new farming practices, and the allocation or spending of household finances. This perception of male authority persists even in households where women contribute significantly to agricultural labour and play a vital role in the daily management of farm activities. Despite their essential contributions and expertise, women's participation in decision-making processes remains severely restricted, reflecting a societal structure that undervalues their input and reinforces traditional gender roles.

> With this our culture here, most of the things done in the house highly depend on what the man of the house has said likewise men make most decisions… but some homes are headed by women for example when the man died or when they divorced, there the decision making depends on the eldest person in that household like for my case I left my marriage now staying in my father's house, there decisions are made by my elder brother though there are some things I may decide on my own but still ask for his permission to do it.— FGD Adult Females, Madi-Okollo

> "What happens is, like I earmarked before, you know the issue of land rights in our community is such that men own most land and major decisions are owned by them also. So, in the end, it's not easy that women can easily make major decisions or even youth", — KII with Implementing Partner Koboko.

HH decision-making around income use: Findings indicate that decision-making processes regarding the allocation and use of household income, especially income generated from agricultural sales or off-farm activities, are predominantly controlled by men. Even when women play a vital role in selling produce at local markets or managing their own small businesses, they often encounter social norms that pressure them to give their earnings to their husbands or male family members. This practice not only restricts their financial independence but also means that male counterparts largely dictate crucial matters of budgeting and spending.

> "I can say that it's me, in my household, because when a buyer buys something from us, they will give the money to my husband, who will eventually sit me down and give me the money. Bring me up to speed on how much we got from the sale, and I will keep the money as we plan for it. The man has authority over the money only until he hands it to me", – FGD women 18-30 years, Lamwo.

> "Even when I sell some vegetables, I must give the money to my husband. He decides how it will be spent." — FGD Adult females Refugees, Kyegegwa

> "For trading, it depends on which businesses, most cases if it's for livestock trading then the men of the family take charge but if it's to sell or purchase farm produce then it's the women and girls for example selling things like tomatoes, cassava, etc", — FGD adolescent Female Refugees, Madi-Okollo.

> "If I want to keep some money for emergencies, my husband says I am hiding things from him." — FGD adult refugee females, Obongi

Additionally, the male-dominated perspective on income management profoundly influences key decisions regarding the reinvestment of profits in agricultural activities, the acquisition of essential household assets, and involvement in savings groups. In these environments, men often harbour concerns that if women take charge of managing or utilizing income independently, it could be misinterpreted as a sign of disrespect or a direct challenge to traditional male authority. However, a small but notable group of women recounted instances of collaborative planning and negotiation, particularly concerning crucial matters such as nutrition and children's education. These positive dynamics may be attributed to exposure to gender-transformative programming from government and partner initiatives, which aim to shift traditional gender roles, or in situations where women have their own independent sources of income. In these contexts, partnerships between men and women in financial decision-making foster a sense of equality, leading to more balanced and harmonious family dynamics.

> "it depends on the family mindset like for me any money we earn from doing any kind of activities it belongs to both of as so anyone who is available at that particular time will receive it and we even planned who to spend it together."— FGD Adult females, Adjumani

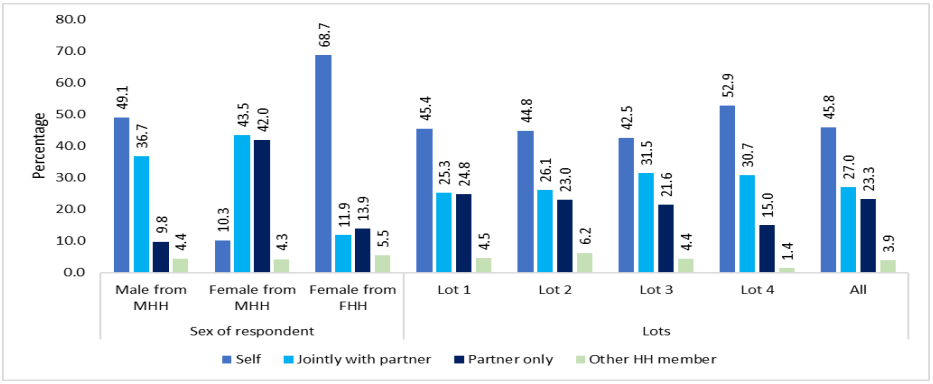
Overall, decision-making regarding income uses in most male headed households remain deeply gendered, with men holding primary authority while women's financial agency is constrained by tradition and social expectations. This not only limits women's empowerment but can also reduce overall household resilience and investment in priorities such as education or climate adaptation. Therefore, efforts to shift these norms through joint financial planning, women's economic groups, and awareness-raising are critical for advancing gender equality and sustainable development.

3.3.2. HH decision-making around farming and CSA

Household survey findings show that whereas most women participated in decisions about adoption of CSA and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices, the final decisions were often made by men in the male-headed households (Figure 3.6). While men from Male-Headed Households (MHH) reported a high percentage of 'Self' decision-making (49.1%), female respondents from MHH showed a significantly higher reliance on 'Partner only' (42.0%) for final decisions on CSA/SLM practices, confirming that even where women participate in the discussion, the ultimate authority often rests with their male partners the selection of CSA or SLM practices and their insights and suggestions are frequently overlooked during discussions about crop choices, household investments, or the implementation of innovative agricultural practices. In the household survey, 47.5% of the women who were not involved in final decision-making, noted that their suggestions were not taken into account.

The district level summaries are given in Table 3.5.

Figure 3.7: Household member who took a final decision about which CSA or SLM practice to adopt within the past 2 years



Similarly, findings from FGDs and KIIs reveal that women's influence in HH decision making is tightly linked to control over productive resources, especially land. For instance, women in FGDs, noted that

suggestions about what to plant, how to use income, or how to adopt new farming techniques are often only taken seriously if a woman owns land in her own right.

> In our home, mostly men decide on farming activities, especially for the main crops like millet and beans. Women sometimes decide on small gardens or vegetables— FGD Males refugee Adolescent, Lamwo

> "The man chooses which seeds we buy, even if I am the one who digs most." — FGD Adult females, Terego

Such remarks illustrate a broader trend in which women's involvement in agricultural activities does not lead to equivalent influence in decision-making processes. Women often state that their proposals, such as the idea of diversifying crop types or implementing water-conserving agricultural techniques, are not taken seriously unless endorsed by the male head of the household. Men also dominate access to extension services, ultimately controlling who is allowed to participate in training sessions or adopt new methodologies. Men's control of the mobility of women and their ultimate control of when women can or cannot go for crucial training and meetings organized on CSA and related activities affect the extent to which women can learn new knowledge and skills to facilitate their adoption of CSA. The patriarchal norms and structures not only undermine women's voice and agency but also limit the potential for households to adopt CSA knowledge and skills even when women succeed in accessing them. The extent to which men will listen and consider women in decisions related to adopting CSA practices is limited by gender and, particularly the patriarchal norms that tend to give decision making power predominantly to men. Women's incentive for CSA is also affected by the reality that even when they participate in production, they may not have a say on the proceeds from adoption of CSA.

> "My husband gets the messages from the agricultural officers and chooses who attends the training. I am told to stay at home." — FGD Adult females, Lamwo

Overall, these findings underscore the potential of working with male allies and champions to amplify women's suggestions and legitimize their participation, promoting shared resource ownership and joint planning as normative, so women's voices are automatically included as well as designing interventions that highlight collective success, and the benefits of women's participation.

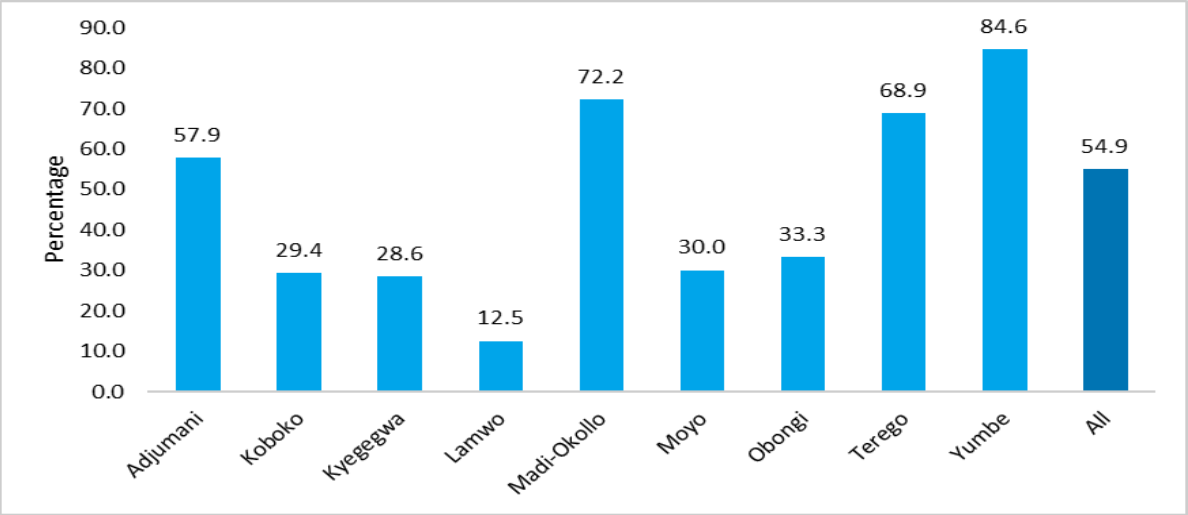
Table 3.5: Household member who took a final decision about which CSA or SLM practice to adopt within the past 2 years by district

	HH member who took the final decision				Woman involved in decision making (MHH)	Woman reported her contributions to decisions were valued (MHH)
	Self (respondent)	Both respondent & spouse	Spouse	Other		
Age						
18-30	36.3	25.3	31.6	6.7	48.8	47.4
31 - 50	44.1	28.8	24.8	2.3	55.2	49.3
51+	62.2	25.0	8.9	3.9	58.3	38.9
Nationality						
Ugandan	45.9	26.7	24.4	2.9	51.7	46.9
Refugee	45.7	27.6	20.6	6.2	58.8	49.7
Respondent is PwD?						
No	46.8	27.8	21.8	3.5	54.0	49.0
Yes	37.2	19.8	36.0	7.0	43.8	26.3
District						
Adjumani	52.2	21.1	17.8	8.9	69.2	43.3
Koboko	60.0	17.6	14.1	8.2	50.0	50.0
Kyegegwa	52.9	30.7	15.0	1.4	59.1	59.1
Lamwo	33.0	41.8	25.3	0.0	52.2	32.6
Madi Okollo	33.3	32.1	27.4	7.2	46.2	46.2
Moyo	59.0	16.9	20.5	3.6	45.5	39.0
Obongi	25.3	17.3	56.0	1.3	38.5	38.5
Terego	40.9	28.4	27.3	3.4	41.2	38.0
Yumbe	50.0	32.5	15.0	2.6	82.6	68.1
All	**45.8**	**27.0**	**23.3**	**3.9**	**53.2**	**47.5**

3.3.3. Decision making and participation in environmental management

Women's participation in community meetings remains low. In the household survey, 45.2% of respondents who reported attending at least one community meeting in the past 12 months noted that very few women were present at these gatherings (Figure 3.8). This observation was reported by both male and female respondents and was especially common in Lot 4 (Adjumani and Lamwo), where limited female participation in community meetings was reported by 71.4% of the respondents.

Figure 3.8: Percentage of respondents that reported very few women participated in the last community meeting (within the past 12 months) about climate or environmental issues



In the context of environmental management in areas affected by refugee populations, the findings highlight a complex landscape marked by distinct challenges and promising opportunities for fostering inclusive and sustainable decision-making practices. Traditionally, local governance frameworks and environmental committees have been predominantly male dominated, leading to the marginalization of voices from women, youth, and PWDs. For instance, survey findings show that the participation of women in community meetings about climate change or environmental and natural resource issues was generally low (Figure 4). However, analysis of qualitative data reveals a growing acknowledgment among stakeholders that inclusive strategies are paramount. Such strategies are essential for effective management of natural resources, safeguarding biodiversity, and enhancing ecosystem productivity. For example, across various sites, initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable environmental management have begun to adopt a more inclusive approach by integrating both host communities and refugees into collaborative committees or natural resource user groups. In some communities, local groups have been established to address natural resource management and climate adaptation. These include water user committees, environmental and forest management committees (responsible for tree planting, restoration, and enforcement of environmental by-laws), and farmer or producer groups (facilitating collective learning and access to climate-smart agricultural practices). It was noted that such groups are supported by NGOs and local government, and sometimes overlap with VSLAs or livelihood associations.

> "Our parish has an environment group to organize tree planting and take care of the forest boundary." — FGD Adult males (host), Kyegegwa

> Yes, we have such groups here especially farmer groups and saving groups where the group members are encouraged to practice early planting, harvesting and proper storage of their food. Some of the groups have men alone, others women alone while some have both men and women in the same group with even disabled people. Most the groups are normally separate for refugees and hosts though a few of the ones for nationals may have one to three refugees – FGD Adult female, Madi-Okollo

However, persistent power imbalances remain a significant barrier. Although women and youth often engage actively in hands-on activities, such as tree planting or community clean-up campaigns, their voices are largely overlooked in crucial discussions regarding decisions about species selection for planting, the designation of protected areas, or equitable sharing of the benefits stemming from restoration activities.

> "In our village, the environment committee was formed by men. Refugee women joined later, but we do not lead," – FGD Adult female refugees, Lamwo.

> "We attend meetings about the forest, but men decide what rules to make. Women and youth just listen." — FGD Females (18-30 years), Obongi.

Additionally, conflicts over land and water resources often see local elders from host communities taking the lead in resolutions that do not always honour the perspectives and rights of refugees. As shared by a community leader from Obongi in an interview, "When disputes arise concerning land or water usage, it is usually the elders from the host community who address the conflicts first. Refugees are permitted to express their views, but these are not consistently recognized or respected by the decision-makers."

Efforts by the government and its implementing partners aimed at promoting inclusive decision-making processes, such as community dialogue sessions and collaborative livelihood projects, have yielded varied outcomes. Where interventions are specifically designed to involve refugees, women, youth, and PWDs as active co-designers and co-implementers, there are notable improvements in community buy-in and conservation outcomes.

> "When the project invited youth and refugees to map the wetland, we all felt ownership. Now people protect it more," — FGD Males Refugees (18-30 years), Kyegegwa.

> "Before, only the local council made decisions, but now refugees and women are in the meetings. It helps to avoid fighting over resources." — Community Environmental Officer, KII, Lamwo

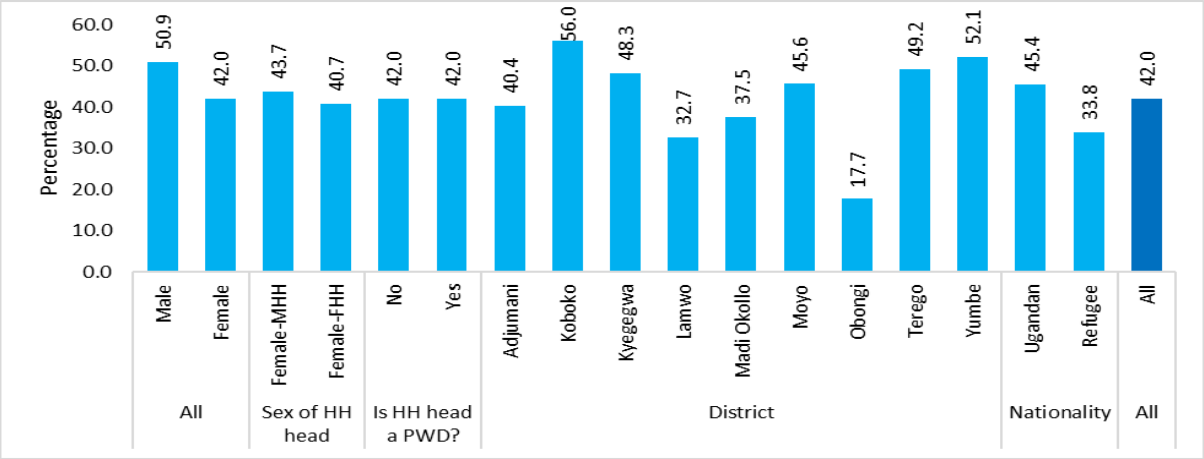
3.3.4. Participation in leadership

Findings reveal an active participation of women in local community decision-making processes. All respondents were members of at least one group at their communities. Forty two percent of women and 50.9% of the men reported holding positions of leadership in these groups (Figure 3.8). However, fewer refugee women (33.8%) as compared women in host community (45.4%) reported being leaders in their groups. Obongi district stood out as one with the lowest proportion of women participating in leadership. Engaging in discussions with various participants has revealed a trend where women are increasingly taking on leadership roles within their communities. Despite this positive change, the landscape of grassroots decision-making remains largely influenced by men. This influence is particularly evident among older male figures and those entrenched in formal or informal leadership roles. Conversations with women indicate that men predominantly hold key positions as group chairpersons, secretaries, and representatives on essential committees, such as those focused on agriculture, environmental management, and savings initiatives. Although there is a growing presence of women and youth at community meetings, it is important to note that their involvement often lacks depth. Their participation is frequently characterized as passive, with women mainly attending for the sake of representation rather than being actively engaged in shaping discussions, setting priorities, or influencing the outcomes of critical decisions.

> "We vote in group meetings, but men always win the positions." — FGD Female 18-30 years, Obongi

> "The chairperson is always a man. Women only help when called." — FGD Female 18-30 years, Lamwo

Figure 3.9: Percentage of women with leadership positions in community groups



Additionally, even when women are assigned specific roles, such as secretary or treasurer, these positions often emphasize administrative duties rather than offering opportunities for leadership or the ability to influence the agenda. Men typically take the lead in establishing group priorities, allocating resources, and making the final decisions regarding which proposals advance for consideration. This dynamic often reflects deeply ingrained social and gender norms, creating an environment in meetings where women or younger members may feel discouraged from sharing their insights and opinions. Similarly, the findings demonstrate elements of intersectionality, showing that the marginalization of voice and agency in decision-making is influenced not only by gender but also by age. Particularly, older males tend to have more influence in decision-making than young men and women. This further compound marginalization based on the positionalities that men and women hold and how these shapes their voice and agency in decision-making during public spaces and community or group meetings affected by social norms.

> "Cultural beliefs say that leadership belongs to men and adults. These beliefs discourage boys and girls from trying to lead. For example, some parents tell girls to focus on cooking and cleaning, not on leadership. I know of boys who wanted to be leaders but were told to wait because they are 'too young'. Girls face more restrictions because people think leadership is 'not for women".— FGD Males refugee adolescents, Lamwo
>
> "When a woman is made treasurer, it is to keep records, not to decide." — FGD Adult females, Terego
>
> "We are there to show numbers, but decisions are made before the meeting." — FGD Young males 18-30 years, Obongi

Similarly, across various locations, study participants noted that leadership positions in farmer- and environment-related committees remain dominated by older males. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) typically participate as group members, but they rarely hold key decision-making roles. It was highlighted that when women, youth, or PWDs do hold formal leadership titles, it is often in response to donor or NGO requirements rather than true community recognition or empowerment. For instance, individuals with disabilities and refugees are often excluded from such positions, as societal perceptions paint them as less competent. Similarly, both boys and girls find it challenging to secure opportunities for leadership since these roles are predominantly perceived as reserved for adults. Although boys occasionally manage to voice their ideas in youth or farmer groups, their counter parts (girls) commonly experience shyness or are actively discouraged from engaging in discussions. Even when girls do muster the courage to share their thoughts, their contributions can be overlooked or dismissed, leading to feelings of underappreciation. Additionally, obstructive parental attitudes further exacerbate the situation, with some parents preferring that their daughters refrain from attending youth meetings, thereby hindering their chances to engage in leadership roles.

"In our farmer association, youth are given heavy tasks but not the chance to lead." — FGD Young Females Refugees, Kyegegwa

"In our community, leadership roles in farming groups and committees are mostly taken by men and older people. Women are involved sometimes but not very often in decision-making roles. For boys and girls our age, it is hard to get a chance to lead because leadership is seen as something for adults…Boys sometimes get to contribute ideas in youth groups or farmer groups, but girls are often shy or discouraged from speaking up. When girls do speak, their opinions are sometimes ignored or people don't take them seriously. People with disabilities and refugees usually don't get invited or chosen because they are seen as less capable." — FGD Males refugee adolescents, Lamwo

"Some girls are shy to speak in public so they fear to take on leadership positions…Some parents don't allow girls to even go for youth meetings and this hinders girls from participating in leadership positions." — FGD Females refugee adolescents, Lamwo

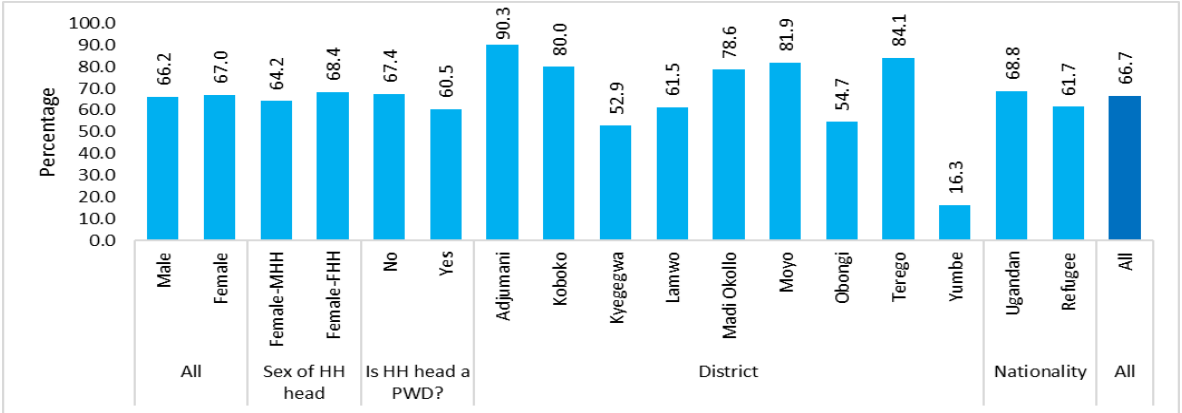
"I am the only woman on the environment committee, and I take notes. The rest are men." — FGD Adult female refugees, Obongi

However, there are exceptions, especially in groups where NGOs have actively championed women's leadership or intentionally established secure environments that amplify the voices of women and young people. In such settings, initiatives may include leadership training programs for women, mentorship opportunities, and forums designed specifically for youth engagement. Despite these positive strides, genuine influence and decision-making power for women and younger individuals still tend to be the exception rather than the norm, as many still face barriers that limit their participation in leadership roles and community discussions. Community-level decision-making continues to reflect entrenched gender and age hierarchies, with men holding the majority of influential roles and setting priorities. Women and youth are present in greater numbers, but meaningful participation and shared authority remain limited. Therefore, transforming these patterns will require not only affirmative measures to increase representation but also shifts in norms, facilitation approaches, and sustained capacity-building for women and young leaders.

3.3.5. Involvement in VSLA/SACCOs

Findings demonstrate that women's engagement in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) is significant across districts. This trend is paving the way for increased financial inclusion, community solidarity, and entrepreneurial opportunities. For instance, findings in figure 3.10 shows that 66.7% of respondents reported membership in VSLAs or SACCOs. Notably, the number women were slightly higher (67%) compared to men (66.2%).

Figure 3.10: Percentage distribution of respondents who are members of VSLAs /and SACCOs



In addition, findings from FGDs, IDIs and KIIs adduce similar evidence. However, it noted that most of the women choose to join exclusively female groups, which are designed to create a nurturing and empowering environment for saving money, accessing loans, and investing in small business ventures. These women-only associations are particularly valued for their role in not only helping women manage their finances but also in enhancing their self-confidence and expanding their social networks. This supportive atmosphere is especially beneficial for younger women and single mothers, who often face distinct challenges in accessing traditional financial services.

> "Our VSLA is mostly women. We encourage each other to save, and now I have started my own small shop." — FGD Adult females, Moyo

> "Being in the savings group means I can help pay school fees for my children, without waiting for my husband." — FGD Young females Refugees, Lamwo

Despite the significant involvement of women in VSLAs, it has been observed that these women-led groups often struggle with limited financial resources and face challenges in establishing connections with larger SACCOs, which are predominantly managed by men. In mixed-gender groups, women often find themselves assigned to supportive roles such as administrative tasks or record-keeping, while the critical decision-making process regarding loans and investment opportunities remains largely controlled by their male counterparts. This dynamic not only restricts women's influence in financial decisions but also perpetuates a cycle of economic dependency and limited empowerment within these collaborative initiatives.

> "I am in the savings group, but when decisions are made, the men talk and the women listen." — FGD Women, Terego

> "In our SACCO, women are many, but men make the decisions on big loans." — FGD Adult Males, Obongi

> "Women in our group keep the records and handle small loans, but when it comes to buying a motorbike or cow, men decide." — FGD Young males, Terego

In addition, IDIs with persons with disabilities also reveal limited participation of PWDs in groups. Participants noted that participation is limited due to physical access to meetings, assumptions about their capacity, and infrequent targeted outreach. Participants noted that when included, they value the social and financial empowerment, but often feel their needs are overlooked.

> "I am part of a savings group, but meetings are far and I need help to get there." — IDI, Female PWD, Kyegegwa

> "We have a group for people with disabilities, but we do not get information on new projects until others have joined."

> "People say someone like me cannot manage a loan, but I want to start my own poultry project." — IDI, Male PWD, Lamwo

Similarly, in many communities, findings show that young girls often find themselves unable to participate in community saving groups due to the substantial domestic responsibilities they bear at home. This situation is particularly urgent as some of these girls are compelled to forgo their education to assist their mothers with household chores, which can include tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger siblings. For instance, discussions with adolescent girls noted that, "Girls in our village often miss out on joining savings groups or training sessions because their daily routines are taken up by household chores, or they are simply not permitted to venture out. In fact, there are girls around us who have stopped attending school altogether because their mothers rely on them for help with various

tasks at home." This insight highlights the crucial intersection between gender roles and educational opportunities for young girls in the community, illustrating the challenges they face in seeking financial empowerment and personal growth.

Discussions with KIIs and local community leaders reveal significant advancements in the participation of women, youth, and PWDs across various community development initiatives such as VSLAs, SACCOs and farmer groups. Despite this progress, there is a pronounced need for continued support systems, comprehensive outreach initiatives, and policy formulation that genuinely promotes equitable representation in leadership roles and enhances access to financial resources. Stakeholders emphasize that fostering true inclusivity requires not only proactive engagement strategies but also a commitment to creating an environment where diverse voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes.

> "We have made efforts to include women and youth, but real decision-making is still not equal. Leadership training and targeted support are needed." — KII, Community Development Officer, Terego

3.4. Access to and Control over Resources

Overview: Findings indicate that, in most households, both men and women, as well as children, have access to essential resources such as land, farm equipment, water, food, health services, and education. However, a deeper examination reveals that, despite this access, women and children often lack full control or ownership over these vital resources. In all districts, findings show that men predominantly hold primary authority over significant assets, such as land, livestock, and financial decisions. Women typically gain access to land through their husbands or male family members, but this arrangement comes with inherent vulnerabilities. For instance, they face the risk of eviction or losing their land rights if their marriage dissolves or if they become widowed. Additionally, livestock, which is frequently viewed as a symbol of wealth and status, is often managed by men and boys.

Gender resource mapping-Male 31+, Kyegegwa

Gender resource mapping-Male 18-30 Refugees, Koboko

Table 3.6: Gender Resource analysis- male refugees, Madi-Okollo

Resource/Service	Access		Control		Remarks/Clarifications
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Land for farming	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Women may farm but men usually decide on land use, sales, or inheritance.
Water sources	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Women collect water but men may decide on water point locations or repairs.
Forest resources	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Women gather firewood, but men control tree cutting or charcoal sales.
Household income	Yes	Yes	No (often)	Yes	Women may earn money but men often decide on major household spending.
SRHR services	Yes (with limits)	Yes	No (often)	Yes	Women/youth may need permission from men to access family planning or HIV testing.
CSA trainings	Yes (with limits)	Yes	No (often)	Yes	Women/youth may attend if allowed, but men decide who goes or implements new methods.
Community meetings	Yes (with limits)	Yes	No (often)	Yes	Women/youth may be present but men dominate decisions and leadership.

These results show that deeply rooted patriarchal norms assign authority and ownership to men because they are seen as the heads of households. For example, participants pointed out that land ownership and inheritance practices often favour men or male lineage. Likewise, men are expected to manage household finances and control income from crop sales, livestock, or even VSLA loans.

> "the man still remains dominant but there are instances where the child and the mother went to visit the grandmother and she gives the child the chicken and if the mother wants to buy clothes for the child, she can tell the man that let us sell this chicken. She cannot sell it without my knowledge since I am in control of the family."— FGD Adult males (31 above), Kyegegwa
>
> "As for the animals, the control is with the man but there are some women, they are also the ones grazing those animals. They do not mind that these animals are grazed at this man's home so for that I need to seek permission. Everything is still under his control but they do not think about it. I think things like the garden, food and animals are under the men's control because he is the head of the home." — FGD Adult females, Terego
>
> "Land is not equally accessed because women are married and brought to the husbands place and a different family who already has the land either inherited or bought and it makes it hard for the wife to have full control over the land she never purchased."— FGD Adult females (31 above), Lamwo
>
> "like I said earlier, men are allowed to have access and control yet women, boys and girls are only allowed to have access but not control over it because men think they are head of the family and they should take control over it and the boys and girls are considered to be so young to be controlling land however a woman who is not at her husband's home is allowed to control a plot that is given to her at her parent's home although it's rear. " — FGD Adult females (35 above), Adjumani
>
> "we own the resources together but men have control, if for example they say that you shouldn't plant certain things in the land, you will certainly not. These differences exist because women have no voice, they are scared of losing their marriages, they don't want to be embarrassed, and this has caused us more suffering. Only those who are educated and can take care of themselves financially are happy somehow but majority of us who did not go to school will have to continue with this suffering"— FGD Adult refugee females, Kyegegwa

It was also noted that men's support or endorsement is often required for women's voices to be recognized or access resources such as loans.

> Most women are in saving groups, but if they want to take a loan, they first tell their husbands because they have to discuss collateral, which in most cases, the man has control over the property—FGD Young women (18-30 years), Kyegegwa.

Although there has been some progress in increasing women's access to financial resources such as loans through VSLAs and SACCOs, their full participation remains hampered by substantial obstacles. Women often juggle multiple responsibilities at home, leaving them with little time or energy to attend meetings or engage in financial activities. Moreover, the situation is particularly challenging for widows and female-headed households. While these women may temporarily utilize land for agricultural purposes or income generation, their rights to this land are frequently contested by extended family members or in-laws. This was particularly challenging where sons or male relatives present, lead disputes that can strip these women of their livelihoods. Additionally, women and girls who aspire to retain income or assets for their personal use encounter backlash. For instance, those who attempt to assert financial independence may be met with harsh accusations of secrecy and mistrust, with some facing rumours of infidelity or disloyalty. This societal scrutiny not only undermines their efforts to gain economic empowerment but also reinforces existing gender norms that discourage female autonomy in financial matters.

3.4.1. Access and control over agricultural land

Access to agricultural land: Overall, 82.6% of households reported access to sufficient land size for farming purposes. However, this varied widely across the lots, nationality and gender of the household heads. Lot 3 (Adjumani and Lamwo) had the least proportion of households with access to sufficient land for agricultural purposes (68.0%) while Lot 2 (Koboko, Madi-Okollo and Terego) had the highest (93.0%). Further, 41.2% of refugee households reported insufficient land for agricultural purposes as compared to 7.3% of host community households.

A substantial disparity was observed by gender of head of household: 24.0% of female-headed households (FHH) reported insufficient access to land, compared to only 13.2% of male-headed households (MHHs). Among the refugee households, the gender gap was even more pronounced—only 63.1% of FHHs reported having insufficient land, compared to 41.1% of MHHs.

Access to sufficient land sizes did not significantly vary by the age or disability status of the household head. Specifically, 81.7% of households headed by individuals aged 18–30 reported adequate land access, compared to 82.8% for those aged 31 and above. Similarly, land access was nearly identical between households headed by persons without disabilities (82.6%) and those headed by PWDs (82.0%)

Table 3.7: Access to land for farming purposes at the household level

	n	% HHs with access to sufficient agricultural land	% Women who own land alone or jointly with partner
Sex of HH head			
Male	500	86.8	67.1
Female	316	75.9	48.7
Age of HH head			
18-30	175	81.7	54.5
31 - 50	404	80.7	53.7
51+	222	85.6	64.5
Head of HH is PwD?			
No	730	82.6	56.0
Yes	86	82.6	60.9
Nationality			
Ugandan	573	92.7	69.3
Refugee	243	58.8	26.3
District			
Adjumani	90	61.1	42.1
Koboko	85	87.1	54.0
Kyegegwa	140	85.7	56.3
Lamwo	91	74.7	40.0
Madi-Okollo	95	93.7	72.6
Moyo	82	96.3	69.6
Obongi	75	65.3	51.6
Terego	78	98.7	67.9
Yumbe	80	78.8	50.0
All	**816**	**82.6**	**56.6**

3.4.2. Access to and control over farming resources information and technologies

Receiving information: Male headed households (MHH) were more likely than female headed households (FHH) to have received information about CSA or sustainable environmental practices or early warning information within the past 12 months (39.0% vs. 28.1%) (Table 3.8). Further, within the male headed households, men were more likely to have received information alone (Table 3.8).

Data in Table 3.8 present data on how intersecting **gender norms, poverty, education, and social expectations** systematically constrain women's access to essential climate and environmental information. These also include structural barriers that limit women's access to information and training related to climate-smart agriculture (CSA), sustainable environmental practices, and early warning systems at the community level.

Women burdened by household chores - creating time poverty for women to attend information sessions and trainings was reported by 66.7%. Due to socially ascribed gender roles, women are primarily responsible for domestic tasks, child-rearing, and caregiving. This limits their availability to attend trainings or meetings, especially when such events are scheduled at times that conflict with their daily routines.

Low educational levels of women pose a significant barrier – low literacy or language barriers was reported by 24.2%: The survey showed that more women than men had no formal education (30.5% vs. 11.3%). These disparities are rooted in longstanding gender norms that prioritize boys' education while preparing girls for domestic and reproductive roles. Consequently, many women have limited literacy or technical capacity to engage with extension materials or training programs.

Table 3.8: Percentage of respondents who reported their households to have received early warning information within the past 12 months preceding the survey

	n	% HHs that received early warning information about climate change	HH member who received the information			
			Respondent	Respondent & partner	Partner only	Other HH member(s)
Sex of HH head						
Male	500	38.8	59.2	22.9	8.9	6.4
Female	316	31.5	81.0	12.7	6.3	0.0
Age of HH head						
18-30	175	27.9	62.5	22.5	10.0	2.5
31 - 50	404	38.6	68.0	19.5	7.8	3.1
51+	222	36.2	66.7	16.7	7.6	7.6
Head of HH is PwD?						
No	730	36.2	65.9	20.3	8.8	3.7
Yes	86	26.9	73.7	10.5	0.0	10.5
Nationality						
Ugandan	573	35.3	60.8	21.7	9.0	6.0
Refugee	243	35.1	80.0	14.3	5.7	0.0
District						
Adjumani	90	37.9	57.1	25.0	10.7	3.6
Koboko	85	38.7	74.1	14.8	3.7	7.4
Kyegegwa	140	62.6	69.4	19.4	5.6	2.8
Lamwo	91	20.1	66.7	20.0	6.7	6.7
Madi-Okollo	95	38.5	56.7	16.7	16.7	6.7
Moyo	82	19.4	61.5	38.5	0.0	0.0
Obongi	75	13.0	50.0	12.5	37.5	0.0
Terego	78	37.5	75.0	16.7	0.0	8.3
Yumbe	80	29.0	73.7	15.8	10.5	0.0
All	**816**	**35.2**	**66.5**	**19.5**	**8.1**	**4.2**

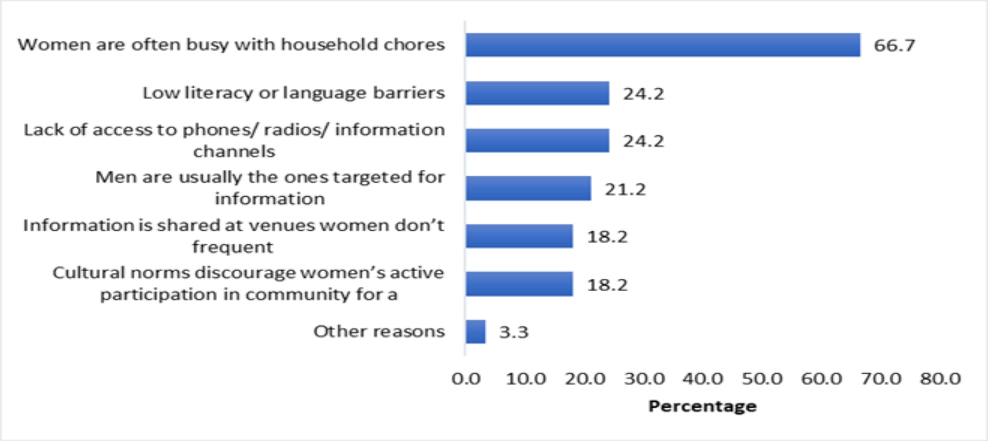
Limited access to communication channels by women reported by 24.2% of women*:* Women's limited access to communication channels, such as mobile phones and radios, have restricted their ability to receive timely and relevant information. This digital and information divide was potentially driven by poverty, gender-based disparities in asset ownership, and male control over household technology and media devices. The survey findings revealed significant gender disparities in access to communication

devices. Radio ownership was reported in 39.0% of male-headed households, compared to just 17.7% of female-headed households. Similarly, 80.6% of male-headed households had at least one member who owned a mobile phone, compared to only 61.3% of female-headed households.

Information or trainings held in venues where women do not frequently visit such as trading centres was reported by 18.2% of the respondents as a barrier: Restricted mobility due to social norms, domestic responsibilities, and in some cases, direct control by male partners, further limits women's participation in community-based information sessions or training events. It was reported that some of the information sessions are held in public or male-dominated spaces—notably trading centers that women rarely visit.

Eighteen percent of the respondents also noted that some information and training efforts target men as the assumed heads of households and primary users of productive resources, especially the land: It was noted that community leaders often engage men in agricultural extension and climate adaptation efforts, reinforcing the perception that men are the decision-makers regarding land use and technology adoption.

Figure 3.11: Percentage distribution of household survey respondents of why women often miss out on receiving information on CA or CA warnings



Similarly, findings from qualitative data show that men predominantly control essential agricultural resources, which include not only land but also livestock, farming equipment, and vital information regarding CSA technologies. Women, on the other hand, generally gain access to land solely through marital ties, and their ownership claims to land or livestock become significantly tenuous in situations such as separation, widowhood, or family disputes. Similarly, the authority to make critical decisions regarding significant investments such as purchasing enhanced seed varieties, fertilizers, or adopting innovative agricultural technologies almost invariably lies with men. This dynamic persists despite the fact that women often bear the brunt of the labour required in agricultural fields, highlighting a stark imbalance in resource control and decision-making power within the farming sector.

> "Women, in particular, bear a heavy load of domestic chores including cooking, cleaning, fetching water, and childcare. Consequently, they have little time or energy left to attend CSA trainings or engage in group farming activities. Additionally, PWDs encounter mobility challenges since many demonstration plots or Farmer Field Schools are located far from their homes and are not easily accessible." — FGD Adult females, Adjumani

> "Even if I dig the land, it's still my husband's name on the agreement." — FGD Adult females Refugees, Kyegegwa

> "When my father died, my brothers shared the cows. As girls, we got nothing." — FGD Females 18-30 years, Lamwo

> "…us women it's hard since our husbands are the ones who control most of the income in the house so money to start or participate in modern farming is not there even if one would want to participate in it"— FGD Adult females, Madi Okollo

However, while women in refugee settlements are often listed as the primary recipients of land plots, especially in female-headed households, actual control over the land remains highly contested and influenced by intersecting factors such as gender, changing household structures, claims by male relatives, social norms, and insecurity of tenure. In addition, access to essential farming inputs and CSA technologies, including drought-resistant seed varieties, innovative water-saving irrigation techniques, and effective soil conservation practices, is profoundly influenced by gender dynamics. Generally, men have a higher likelihood of benefiting from CSA initiatives, particularly those requiring a financial investment, such as beekeeping or agroforestry. These activities often demand significant capital and resources, which men typically have greater access to, leading them to participate more actively in agricultural extension services and training programs aimed at enhancing farming practices. Similarly, men are more frequently involved in large-scale farming operations, marketing initiatives, and important decisions regarding crop selection. This trend increases their access to CSA activities that require investment capital—such as establishing beekeeping ventures or managing agroforestry plots. They often enjoy easier access to loans, agricultural information, and networks, enabling them to manage larger farming endeavours like extensive agroforestry projects or commercial poultry farms.

> Men are often more involved in large-scale farming, marketing, and decision-making about which crops to plant. They benefit more from CSA activities that require capital, like beekeeping or agroforestry, because they have better access to loans and information. For example, while women may focus on small kitchen gardens, men are more likely to manage bigger agroforestry plots or commercial poultry farms. This means men may gain more income, but women's activities contribute significantly to household food security— FGD Adult males, Madi Okollo

> "The men get the messages from the agricultural officers and decide who attends training." — FGD Adult males, Obongi.

> "Even when they call for training, they say women are invited, but it's mostly the men who attend." — FGD Adult females, Lamwo

> "My husband attended the training and brought seeds home, but he planted them himself." — FGD Adult females, Lamwo

Additionally, several participants mentioned that while CSA initiatives are designed to benefit all stakeholders, refugees often receive a disproportionate share of support. This is largely due to the increased focus that implementing partners place on addressing the needs of refugee populations. This uneven support can sometimes create tension between the two groups. However, to mitigate such conflicts, initiatives promoting joint farmer groups have been introduced, aiming to foster cooperation and resource sharing. For instance, in a discussion with adult females in Madi Okollo, they noted that "Both refugees and host community members are targeted for CSA activities. Refugees often get more support from NGOs, like free seeds or training, while host communities may have better access to land. Sometimes, this causes tension, but joint farmer groups are being promoted to encourage sharing of knowledge and resources. For example, in our village, a joint group manages a demonstration plot for drought-resistant crops, benefiting both groups"

It was also observed that in situations where women gain access to innovative technologies or essential resources, often facilitated by NGOs through strategic outreach programs and demonstration plots, the impact can be profoundly transformative. Women often experience enhanced productivity and empowerment as they learn to use tools and techniques that significantly improve their livelihoods. However, ensuring the sustainability of these gains presents a complex challenge. Without ongoing

support, consistent follow-up, and crucial changes in both household dynamics and broader community norms, these advancements may prove temporary. It's essential to foster an environment where the benefits can be maintained over time, requiring a systematic approach that reinforces the initial progress made.

> "Extension workers now visit our group directly, which helps those who can't travel." — FGD Adult females Refugees, Kyegegwa

> "We had a project for women to grow vegetables together. It was good, but after funding stopped, it faded." — FGD Adult females, Moyo

Overall, access to and control of farming resources and CSA technologies for women and girls remain significantly restricted by social and structural barriers. This exclusion not only hinders their productivity and empowerment but also undermines the overall resilience of households and communities to climate change.

3.4.3. Access to knowledge and skills around environmental management and CSA

Access to knowledge, skills, and essential tools for effective, sustainable natural resource management and CSA is notably uneven across various communities, often reflecting deep-rooted gender disparities. Findings particularly indicate that men, especially those in leadership positions within their communities, are disproportionately more likely to receive training in environmental management practices. During discussions with participants from FGDs, it emerged that extension agents and trainers often target primary "household heads," reinforcing a patriarchal structure where men dominate the acquisition of new skills and critical decision-making processes. Despite women's crucial roles in daily resource utilization, such as collecting fuelwood, managing water resources, and maintaining home gardens, they frequently find themselves excluded from technical training sessions. In many cases, when women do receive information, it is second hand and limited. Cultural expectations surrounding gender roles further burden women, making it difficult for them to attend these essential trainings. The disparities become even more pronounced for certain demographics. For instance, it has been observed that men, along with refugees and wealthier individuals, disproportionately benefit from training opportunities.

> Men, refugees, and the wealthy tend to benefit significantly from the teachings, with more men than women participating. Those refugees, at least, are taught and provided more inputs than we are; they claim the largest percentage of recipients is among refugees. OPM knows that we, the host community, represent 30% while the refugees represent 70% of any program that arises. — FGD Adult female, Madi Okollo

> "Men go for the trainings and bring back the new seeds or tools. Women only learn what the men share." — FGD Adult females, Lamwo

> "The young people do most of the tree planting, but only elders decide which species to grow." — FGD Young men (18-30 years), Kyegegwa

These findings highlight how traditional norms restrict young girls' access to educational opportunities. However, in some areas, there are reports that women have access to training programs. For instance, female participants in Madi-Okollo indicated a higher attendance of women at community training sessions compared to men. Some men in these communities perceive such training as primarily catering to women; they often only show interest when financial incentives are involved. As one adult female from Madi-Okollo noted, "Here, it's mostly women who attend community meetings or trainings because men think such initiatives are for women. They only show up when they expect monetary rewards."

Despite some participants showing enthusiasm for training, a significant gap in opportunities still exists. For instance, an adult female from Lamwo expressed her desire for increased support from the government or NGOs to expand training on CSA and environmental conservation practices in their community. She emphasized the urgency by stating, "The increasing effects of climate change have caused extensive damage. Many people here, due to the low educational standards, lack essential knowledge about CSA practices, remaining ignorant and in dire need of training to adopt these sustainable methods."

Furthermore, even when skills are acquired, practical access to essential tools and resources—such as seedlings, watering cans, protective gear, and informative manuals—continues to pose a significant challenge, particularly for marginalized groups. Initial distributions of these resources are not consistently followed up with replenishments. Those who benefit the most tend to be members of active farmer groups or VSLAs, where collective access and collaborative learning foster opportunities for shared growth and knowledge.

> "The men in the farmer group got new hoes and seeds. Women could use them too, but only if they join the group and are accepted." — KII, Community Environment Facilitator, Kyegegwa

> "Extension workers try to share information with everyone, but sometimes the message does not reach people with disabilities or those who cannot travel." — KII Environmental Officer, Lamwo

3.4.4. Barriers to access to and control over resources and services

Restrictive social norms: Across all study sites, entrenched social norms dictate what women and girls can and cannot do. Girls are often expected to prioritize domestic work over education or training. Decision-making regarding attending trainings, joining economic groups, or traveling for opportunities almost always requires seeking permission from their husbands or fathers. Girls are socialized from a young age to believe that certain spaces and opportunities, such as community leadership, public meetings, or technical training, are a preserve for men.

> "I wanted to attend a training, but my father said it was not for girls." — FGD Adolescent girls, Obongi

> "Some men don't like wives to attend group activities, saying it makes them stubborn." — FGD Young Women (18-30 years), Terego

Limited mobility: Physical mobility for women and girls is limited by fear of harassment, social suspicion, and the necessity of male accompaniment, especially after dark or when traveling to remote villages for meetings or training. For women and girls with disabilities, these obstacles are intensified by lack of accessible transportation, stigma, and overprotective families often confine them to their homes.

> "If I go far for meetings, people say I am not a good wife." — IDI Woman with disability, Kyegegwa

Limited capital: Access to cash for inputs (seeds, fertilizer, livestock) is significantly lower for women and youths. For instance, many women rely on small earnings from produce sales or savings groups, which are seldom sufficient for substantial investment. Men often control household spending, requiring women to seek permission for larger purchases.

> "the same thing with the youths, getting start-up capital in this community is not easy since most of us are even unemployed hence money for buying this modern equipment is not there making it hard for us to get involved in these modern farming activities" — FGD Adult females, Madi-Okollo

"Women and youth often lack access to loans or start-up capital needed for CSA activities like purchasing drought-resistant seeds or water tanks. Most financial institutions require collateral, which many of us do not have. Refugees and PWDs are even less likely to own assets, making it hard for them to invest in modern farming methods or buy necessary inputs" — FGD Adult males, Madi-Okollo

"I would say maybe 40 to 60% for men, the reason being that men are the ones largely involved in the cash crops. And then the women are more involved in the food production crops, because of this, you find that many of these ways or methods are used in the cash crops, I would say 60% for men, then 40% for women", — KII CDO, Terego.

Compounded exclusion for women with disabilities and adolescent girls: Women with disabilities encounter numerous challenges that both physically restrict their mobility and create societal barriers rooted in prevailing attitudes. These obstacles often result in a profound sense of isolation from vital community resources, opportunities, and social support networks. Similarly, adolescent girls face unique, compounded disadvantages, navigating life not only as young individuals but also as females in a society that frequently prioritizes male preferences. This intersection of gender and disability can intensify their struggles, making it even more difficult for them to access education, healthcare, and empowering experiences, ultimately hindering their overall development and well-being.

"Nobody tells me about meetings or trainings. They think I cannot manage because of my leg." — IDI, woman with disability, Obongi

"My mother keeps me home so I am not laughed at because I limp." — IDI Young female with disability, Lamwo

CSA input distributions and training access: Input distributions (seeds, fertilizer, tools) and CSA training opportunities are often publicized in male-dominated forums at trading centers, through radio announcements, or at community meetings primarily attended by men. Participants especially women noted that they hear about distributions of seedlings after when it's done, unless specifically targeted by NGO projects.

"Last time, the seeds were given out at a meeting. I heard about it too late." — FGD Adult female, Terego

"The extension workers come to the center and call the leaders usually men. Women only find out later." — FGD Adult Female refugees, Obongi

Additionally, participants noted that women have less access to information channels. It was observed that they own fewer radios or mobile phones and rarely participate in social gatherings where news is shared, which are often scheduled during their busiest hours. This further limit their ability to take advantage of new market or CSA opportunities.

3.5. Aspirations, skills, and knowledge

3.5.1. Personal and livelihood aspirations

Across all districts, there is a remarkable sense of resilience and optimism, especially among women, youth, and individuals with disabilities, even in the face of significant challenges. Participants expressed a strong desire for greater economic independence, personal dignity, and a brighter future for themselves and their families. For many, the aspiration to own a small business or expand agricultural ventures is viewed as a vital stepping stone toward breaking free from poverty and becoming self-reliant. For instance, women and young people are particularly inspired by stories of others who have successfully launched projects in poultry farming, beekeeping, and vegetable cultivation. These endeavours not only provide financial income but also foster a deep sense of pride in their abilities and

achievements. This ambition is particularly strong among women who often face limited access to household resources, fuelling their quest for personal income sources. As evidenced by the quotes below, findings reveal that study participants are enthusiastic about setting aspirations or goals that can transform their livelihoods and enhance their resilience in the context of climate change. There is a greater focus on diversifying livelihoods through starting income-generating activities that complement agriculture. The results also highlight the aspirations, particularly among women, to become more economically independent and reduce reliance on their husbands.

> "Many boys and girls want to start small businesses like selling produce or trading goods in the market. Others want to lead agricultural groups or start cooperatives to improve farming methods…Most of us boys want to start our own farms, especially growing crops like maize, beans, and vegetables. Some also want to raise livestock like goats or chickens to generate income. A few want to lead community tree planting projects to help conserve the environment." — FGD Adolescent refugee boys Lamwo

> "I want to have my own business so I can support my children and not depend on my husband." — FGD Adult females, Moyo

> "I want to buy goats and start my own project. Then, I can pay school fees without waiting for my husband." — FGD Adult females Refugees, Kyegegwa

> "We see other women selling vegetables and charcoal in the market. I wish I could do the same." — FGD Young females (18-30 years), Obongi

Additionally, aspirations for education and professional growth hold immense significance, particularly among young individuals. Many adolescent girls and boys envision bright futures that involve pursuing higher education and obtaining skilled positions in various fields, especially in health care, education, and business. These professions not only promise financial security but also bring a sense of respect and standing within their communities.

> "My dream is to finish school and become a nurse or teacher." — FGD Adolescent girls Refugees, Kyegegwa

> "I want to become a mechanic so I can support my family and train others." — FGD Adolescent refugee boys, Obongi.

> "I wish my children could all go to school and have a better life than I have had." — FGD Adult female refugees, Obongi

Similarly, findings show that interest in CSA is growing across diverse age demographics and various districts, driven by an increasing desire for innovative practices, climate resilience, and strong leadership. This heightened enthusiasm is especially evident in communities that have experienced successful interventions or received comprehensive training. For instance, many young people and women recognize the significance of implementing CSA strategies, such as cultivating drought-resistant crop varieties, enhancing irrigation techniques, and adopting soil conservation practices, as vital measures to combat the impacts of climate change and tackle issues of food insecurity. First-hand experiences, such as field demonstrations showcasing these sustainable agricultural practices or informative visits from extension officers, play a crucial role in sparking interest and ambition among community members. For example, during a focus group discussion, participants expressed eagerness to explore new agricultural methods as well as practical guidance.

> "I want to learn about drought-resistant crops and better ways to farm." — FGD Males (18-30 years), Obongi

> "Tree planting and mulching are good, but I need someone to show me how." — FGD Adult female refugees, Obongi

However, it should be noted that setting these aspirations or goals is one thing and embarking on the journey to convert or translate these intentions into action is another. In a largely patriarchal context, navigating barriers such as harmful gender norms that limit women's mobility, decision making (due to unequal power relations), time poverty due to imbalances in division of labour between men and women (and girls) embedded in the gender roles (including unpaid care work), and the unequal access to and control over resources (land, money, skills, access to information) between men and women (and girls) may limit their ability to convert their intentions into action. Therefore, a strong focus on integrating gender transformative programming activities into the CSA and natural resources conservation is crucial to enabling women, girls and youth to exercise their agency.

3.5.2. Enablers to personal and livelihood aspirations

Family support: Participants noted that family support is central but extends far beyond emotional encouragement. When families actively share domestic responsibilities, invest in girls' education, help with childcare, or step in during illness or busy seasons, women and youth gain both time and mental space to participate in training, groups, and new ventures. Support from relative and siblings is equally critical, especially in polygamous or extended family households.

> "Actually, there is some change; men look after children, and they cook, unlike in the past when they never did anything. Both men and women go to dig in the garden. Let me use my household as an example. When I was called for this meeting yesterday, my husband told me this morning that I don't need to move with the kids; he will look after them from home, which means he will cook for them and attend to them fully. Which, in the past, was never done"— FGD with women 18-30 years, Lamwo

Networking and group formation: the study participants explained the power in unity through groups. These were either gender (women) or age (youth) specific. Working in groups gave the members a broader voice and set targets towards their aspirations. They for insteas pool produce together for better bargains during selling.

> "They have their personal gardens and wish to make money from the sales of the produce. In most of the groups here, in fact all of the groups here, the number of women is more. This shows that women have bigger aspirations. Women want to start their own businesses while youth want to have brighter futures through education and whatever they get from the gardens"—FGD Adult Males, Yumbe)

3.6. Accessibility to SRHR

3.6.1. Availability and access to SRHR services

Findings indicate that SRHR services, including family planning, HIV/STI screening, and antenatal care, among others, are available at all government run and NGO supported health facilities across every district. Participants observed that the government and partners are making efforts to ensure these services are accessible to the intended users, particularly through outreach, mobile clinics, and VHTs, among other methods. The services are primarily utilized by women, youth, and adolescents (both girls and boys).

"We have a health center nearby where we can get medicine and family planning." — FGD Adult Females Refugees, Kyegegwa

"At least once a month, the mobile team comes with HIV testing kits." — FGD Young males, Terego

"I go for family planning every three months, and the nurse knows me." — FGD Adult women, Obongi

Despite availability of the services, gender role distribution at household level hindered use especially in Lamwo district. The female participants emphasized time consuming reproductive roles can be;

Yes, it affects them; most times, women are very busy at home, looking after the children, home, and husbands that they normally forget about themselves. It's only when something is severe that they go to the hospital.

Yes. It affects us. Normally if I need to go to the hospital, I will just go to a small clinic next to us to get whatever medical attention I might need instead of going to a big health center because of time.

However, it was noted that the availability of services varied across study sites visited basing on geography, outreach efforts, and the specific demographics of the population. Participants noted that access to SRHR is limited in more remote villages or refugee settlements where challenges such as distance, a lack of information, and sporadic health worker visits hinder service uptake.

3.6.2. Impact of climate and workloads on SRHR access

Findings reveal that women's access to SRHR services is significantly impacted by the agricultural calendar and changing climate conditions. In districts like Obongi and Moyo, participants noted that the onset of the rainy season often brings prolonged flooding, which can inundate roads and submerge bridges. This situation is especially acute in refugee settlements and remote villages, where access to health centers becomes severely limited, complicating women's efforts to seek necessary medical care.

"When it rains heavily, it becomes difficult to access the health facilities due to the bad state of the roads…sometimes when there is excess heat, we fail to walk to the health facilities since it is a bit far from here." — FGD Female refugee adolescents, Lamwo

"When drought or floods hit, many roads become impassable or water sources dry up. Women and youth have to walk much longer distances to reach health centers. Sometimes, they just give up and miss appointments for family planning or antenatal care because the journey is too difficult or dangerous, especially during the rainy season" — FGD Adult males Refugees, Madi-Okollo

"when it's heavily raining, it's equally hard to get access to the health facility or you will have to go only when the rain has stopped which will definitely delay your time of going to the health facility…and in august most times it rains heavily with floods spoiling most of the roads making access to the facility very difficult" — FGD Adult females, Adjumani

"During the heavy rains, we cannot go to the hospital because the roads become inaccessible. The health centers are even far from us and sometimes we don't get time since it's a busy season with a lot farm work. That is when miscarriages are more because sometimes the women do not know that they are pregnant" — FGD Adult females, Madi-Okollo

Conversely, during the dry season, women and girls face the daunting challenge of increased distances and time needed to collect essential resources like water and firewood, in addition to tending their gardens. These added burdens further restrict their ability to visit clinics for SRHR services. Furthermore, the peak periods for planting and harvesting crops greatly extend women's work hours. They must juggle the demands of rigorous field labour alongside their household chores, childcare responsibilities, and various community duties, creating a difficult balancing act that can detract from their health and well-being.

> "… droughts increase household burdens, women and girls spend more hours fetching water or searching for food and firewood. This leaves them with little time or energy to attend SRHR clinics for services like HIV testing, counselling, or postnatal care. Youth, especially girls, may also be pulled out of school to help at home, making it harder for them to access information and services" — FGD Adult males Refugees, Madi-Okollo

> "when the sun heat is so strong it's very hard to walk on that strong sun heat to the health facility because one can easily faint on it" — FGD Adult females, Adjumani

> "During drought, it is also difficult to go to the hospital because the heat is too much to walk in it. We sometimes encounter snakes and scorpions on the way which are dangerous to us." — FGD Adult females, Madi-Okollo

Moreover, it was noted that many women, especially those who are the primary earners in their families or responsible for caring for young children, consistently prioritize the urgent demands of daily survival and the immediate needs of their households over preventive health care measures. In cases where they encounter overwhelming workloads, these women often find themselves needing to postpone or completely forgo essential health services. This includes antenatal care appointments, necessary refills for family planning methods, and routine HIV check-ups, as they focus on the pressing needs of their families rather than their own health care.

> "women have a lot of household activities that sometimes makes it hard for time to go for their doctor's appointment in time." — FGD Adult females, Adjumani

> "Sometimes you miss my health appointments during harvest because we must finish before the rains spoil the crops." — FGD Adult females, Terego

3.6.3. Gender norms and decision-making around sexual health

Societies world over attach different interpretations and values when it comes to sexuality. Some craft it as sacred and secret hence crucial for group norms and social beliefs (Tamale, 2021). Throughout all study districts, deeply entrenched patriarchal norms influence how decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health are made within households. Married women, in particular, are expected to seek explicit permission from their husbands before accessing services such as contraception, HIV testing, or antenatal care. Husbands are viewed as the ultimate decision-makers, and their approval is perceived as essential to protect family honour and prevent gossip or suspicion.

> "I cannot go for contraception without telling my husband. If I do, there will be trouble." — FGD Adult females, Kyegegwa

> "If I want to go for HIV testing, my husband asks why and if I am hiding something." — FGD Adult female refugees, Obongi

These norms are reinforced by elders, community leaders, and sometimes even health providers. For young women, advice from mothers and elders often warns against independent action, framing sexual health as a matter of marital obedience and discretion. In such cases men and society control women's bodies, reproductive rights and decisions relating to what they can do or not with their bodies.

"My mother says a wife should never make such decisions alone." — FGD Young females, Obongi

"As a husband, I should know what my wife is doing, especially about family planning. We must decide together for the good of the family." — FGD Adult males, Lamwo

"People think a good wife will always consult her husband before such things." — KII religious leader, Obongi

Adolescent girls and young women face significant constraints, fearing that seeking health independently will be perceived as promiscuity or disrespect, which may lead to stigma or even violence. Peer groups often reinforce these messages, further hindering open discussion and personal agency. Health workers and key informants also acknowledge these barriers, recognizing that women may postpone or avoid necessary care to prevent conflict at home. Some clinics attempt to promote couples counselling, but participation remains low unless community norms begin to shift.

"We see many women who want services but are afraid to come without their husbands. It is a big problem for their health." — KII, Lamwo

The control of women and girls' bodies and autonomy is largely emphasized as moral issue hence calling for moral policing. Feminist scholars have argued over the years that such control is born in sexist beliefs which permit gendered moralization (Morgenroth et. Al 2024), where behavior can be acceptable and right only when men approve of it, and wrong when women independently take the decision. Women's desire for social affirmation and approval drives them to conform to such control, hence limiting their autonomy.

Barriers to access SRHR services

Provider attitudes and stigma: Despite the availability of services, participants, especially women, adolescent girls and PWDs, expressed their concerns about the behaviour of some health care professionals. They reported that some health workers often exhibit judgmental or dismissive attitudes especially when interacting with vulnerable groups, such as adolescents, unmarried women, and PWDs, who are seeking essential SRHR services. These negative interactions can create an environment of stigma and fear, discouraging individuals from accessing the care they need.

"Sometimes the health worker calls out your name and everyone hears why you came." — FGD Adult females, Terego

Sometimes the health workers are rude and most of the people do not understand English which makes communication difficult— FGD Female refugee adolescents, Lamwo

Lack of youth-friendly and confidential spaces: Adolescent boys and girls shared their observations that very few healthcare facilities provide dedicated, private spaces specifically designed for the needs of youth and unmarried women. Instead, most clinics feature communal waiting areas where friends, family members, and acquaintances can easily recognize those seeking medical assistance. This absence of privacy and confidentiality significantly deters many young individuals from accessing the healthcare services they need. As a result, this could compel some youths to travel great distances to find facilities that ensure their anonymity and protect them from potential judgment within their communities.

"Sometimes there is no privacy at the health facilities which discourage the young people from accessing and utilizing SRHR services."— FGD Adolescent Refugee girls, Lamwo

"We have to wait outside with everyone, and the elders watch you." — FGD Adolescent girls, Moyo

Physical and logistical barriers: Some participants emphasized a significant concern about the distance of health facilities from homes, particularly in refugee and rural areas. Many individuals, especially vulnerable young women, adolescent girls, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), encounter considerable challenges in accessing these essential services. The cost of transportation can be prohibitive, and public transport options are often limited for instance in Madi-Okolo. Additionally, during the rainy season, some roads for instance in Koboko become impassable, further complicating efforts to reach health facilities. This lack of access not only creates barriers to receiving important healthcare but also worsens the vulnerabilities of those already facing hardships in these communities.

> "For people with disabilities, the clinics are often far and hard to reach. There is no transport or wheelchair access. Sometimes, health workers are not patient or respectful. Costs, even for transport, make it difficult for refugees to come regularly."— FGD Adolescent Refugee boys, Lamwo

Service unreliability and stock-outs: Frequent shortages of family planning supplies, such as contraceptives, HIV testing kits, and essential medications, severely erode public confidence in the healthcare system. Women often share their frustrating experiences of visiting healthcare facilities multiple times, only to find the services they need unavailable, leaving them feeling disheartened and neglected. Each visit becomes a test of patience as they confront the disappointment of being turned away repeatedly, which not only disrupts their health needs but also undermines their trust in the very system designed to support them. Additionally, operating hours at certain health facilities can significantly limit access to SRHR services. For instance, during focus group discussions among adult females in the Adjumani, participants noted that "some of this health facilities close early especially our health centre here is very busy in the morning however in the afternoon is a different story and there completely not there in the evening so if you go past that, you won't get the service providers— FGD Adult females, Adjumani. This means that if individuals arrive later in the day, they will likely find that no assistance is available, leaving them without access to crucial health services.

Overall, barriers to SRHR access are complex, involving provider attitudes, facility design, physical distance, unreliable supplies, social norms, and fear of stigma. These challenges are most pronounced for adolescents, unmarried women, and PWDs, requiring a coordinated, multi-level response that combines service improvement, provider training, confidentiality protocols, mobile outreach, and intensive community norm-shifting.

3.7. Social and cultural norms

Social norms are the perceived, informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community (Cislaghi, Ben and Lori Heise, 2017). Norms direct human behaviour by creating an interplay between behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs describing what is acceptable behaviour, what we believe others do as well as what we believe others expect and approve of us to do. Such behaviour is sustained by sanctions for non-compliance with the expected norm as well as rewards for compliance. A social norm exists when individuals practise a behaviour because they believe that others like them or in their community practise the behaviour (descriptive norms), or because they believe that those who matter to them approve of them practising the behaviour (injunctive norm) (UNICEF, 2021).

Understanding social norms at different levels, i.e., individual and collective, is crucial for behavioural change. The norms can either be harmful or beneficial for the well-being of the communities since they highly shape and maintain social order (Social Norms Learning Collaborative, 2021). Social norms are intertwined with gender norms, which refer to the collective beliefs and expectations within a society about what behaviours are appropriate for women and men, and the relationships and interactions between them at a given point in time (UNICEF, 2021). Various norms were identified in the study and these were specific to particular behaviours but also different spaces/institutions as discussed below.

Behaviour	Norm	Reward	Punishment
Submissiveness in Marriage	Married women are expected to be submissive to their husbands	Stable marriages	Shame to the family and relatives of the woman Isolation from the community
Headship of households	Men are the heads of the households; they own and control all resources	Acceptance within the community Peace in the family	
Movement outside the household	Women are expected to keep in the domestic space and only move out with the permission of men/ husbands.	Harmonious living	Domestic violence Judgement from society
Decision making on land use	Men are the decision makers and are not challenged A man is always right	Collective belonging and identity	Gender based violence against women as a way of discipling them.
Family protection	Men and boys are protectors. Men are strong and courageous.		
Reporting against GBV (in the home)	Home issues are private issues and cannot be brought to the public	Using that family as a role model	Ridicule from the community Divorce may result
Switching gender roles	Women are expected to cook while men graze	Role models for society	Blame for witchcraft Dissociation from other men.
Gender based violence	A woman who is beaten is the one who is loved.	Marriages last longer	Divorce may result IPV may result
Inheritance of property	Women don't inherit land- not from their fathers nor husbands		

Marriage is expected to bring people together as individuals and as families. This is attained through forgiveness and respect for the household head who in most cases is the husband. However, where the social norms that guide the marriage institution are not observed, especially by the woman, then marriage becomes a dividing factor where blame and shame are put on not only the married woman, but also her family and relatives as these are expected to have socialized her into proper womanhood. One key informant had this to say.

> "Once you are married as a woman, you are supposed to behave well by obeying and respecting your husband. It is from your parents and it passed on. Like when you are a woman and you don't respect your man socially, where you are married to, even your relatives as a lady, they will feel ashamed. So socially, you will not live good, which means your social life is affected. You may think where you are going to join a group of people to discuss something but they leave you out" —KII Terego.

Latrine use is key for community proper sanitation and other WASH activities. It was mentioned that several organizations including save the children had sensitized communities and also build pit latrines. However, use was highly affected by social norms which don't promote latrine use. One key informant explained;

> "I remember there was a lady. I've forgotten the tribe where they said for they don't use pit latrines. They don't use pit latrines. They are supposed to defecate in the bush. So, when this Save the Children came helping, also LWF, they were at least putting pit latrines for them. There's one implementer who was testifying that every time when she goes in the community, she passes, that lady will tell her, Madam, your toilet is there. I'm not using it. It is a little bit a challenge. But as I'm still insisting, if the dialogues continue, we are going to change as time goes"—KII CDO, Obongi

3.7.1. Cultural and religious norms shaping access and participation

Cultural and religious norms work together to further strengthen the privileged position of men when it comes to access, control and use of (productive) resources including land. Culturally women can only access land through their association/relationship with men as fathers or husbands unless they privately buy private land under their names. While under their fathers' house, women and girls can use his land but when they get married, they lose this access and are culturally expected to use the land of the husband. Such beliefs hinder women's active participation but also control of the productive resources. Asked whether norms hinder women's participation, one key informant from Yumbe had this to say

"Yeah, yeah. harmful cultural practices are blocking these women from participating in agriculture. Because here, once a lady has got married, she no longer has land in her father's estate now. They are considered to be now having land at her husband's place. And when things fall apart from the husband's place, this lady here will come, and will come and have no land. They tell them you don't have land.

Such situations force women to choose between marriage and land ownership which hinder active decision making. Women may also be forced to keep in and endure abusive marriages and toxic relationships as a way to keep accessing and using the husband's land for agricultural purposes. A key informant noted that women's success is affected by the instability in marriage as it affects their production, yet marriage automatically means losing land at your father's house.

"But if she has that mentality that anytime I will live here, success will come. If you are married, they have paid your dowry. Officially they have given you to the other clan. So, the thing is you cannot have two (shares of land)" –KII, Yumbe

Access and use of land however, doesn't automatically permit control over the produce. Since the cultivation is done on the man's land, then the produce automatically belongs to him and has power to decide how to use such produce. This exacerbates women's economic dependency on men. Another participant explained that;

"Our culture emphasizes that men are the monopoly. In agriculture, when it comes to collection (harvesting) of the crops, the crops are collected, and put in their stores. In selling and marketing, the woman has no voice. They cannot contribute in deciding the price or how much of the produce can be sold. The women are only active in times of cultivating or harvesting" —KII CDO, Yumbe

Social norms in this case give men control over women's labour and time use. Ownership of land grants men authority over all the produce from that land. It increases women's dependency on men as decision makers and household heads. Women are not expected to complain but rather submit and comply with the men's decisions and maintain social order, as power hierarchies are clear. Non-adherence would result into disciplinary action which comes in a number of ways including gender-based violence. Group discussions too reflected such beliefs, arguing that it is expected for men to control the income that women raise for effective planning for the family. Many adult male groups further indicated that "good women" are expected to hand over all their earnings to their husbands.

"Yes, even whatever the woman is having, if she is working, you want that money to be given to him, or he must know how that money is being used, bring and then you see how we are going to use that money, if they want to use that money, see how that money can be used. Yes, even if she is the woman working, that's not what the woman wants to know, if the woman is earning, if she is working or doing business, automatically that's the problem which we are having now in families also"—KII-Kyegegwa.

Men further fail to appreciate and support women's participation in development groups. As heads of households, men want to control the loans and funds women get from development initiatives.

"The moment they give money; they find there is domestic violence. They are fighting for that money. The man wants part of that money first to go and drink. They think it's free money, that money has been put in place, they give that business, so that they do that business and that money multiplies, so that will help the family. But the man also is a signatory, he wants first to go and drink, he wants all that money to be given to him. Also, sometimes you find some women are poor, they register, they line through all their husbands' phones"—KII Kyegegwa.

Men's control over resources exacerbates feminized poverty as it hinders women's income, savings and eventual investment. This is further manifested in access and use of natural resources. In Kyegegwa it was explained that the use of resources for instance wetlands is hard for women since it requires large amounts of capital , which many don't have.

> "The resources we are talking about I would say it is for both, but you find that to a bigger extent men want to dominate with land, because you know these natural resources, especially land, requires bigger capital, and not many women have that money to access and control the land. Then natural resources, as in for wetlands, men access because the conditions in the natural resources actually are not easy. They are not conducive for women—KII Kyegegwa

The patriarchal nature of the societies gives men dominance and control even when it comes to decision making affecting families but also entire communities. Men decide on women's health, bodies, reproductive rights, their income, their movement and feeding. Discussions revealed that men are considered permanent members of society and so would cater for its sustainability and development while women are perpetually on the move and can never be trusted with important decisions. One of the male groups agreed that

> "Women cannot sit under trees to discuss issues of a clan. No, it's not possible. Because women are always moving. It's either she has gotten married to another place or she is divorced and returns to her village but men are permanent in these areas… men are sure to maintain and protect the areas, and develop them for their children" –FGD, Young Males 18-30, Yumbe.

Male youth having such perceptions demonstrates how deep and internalized social norms are in this area. The gender biases are vividly expressed and the disregard for women's contribution is emphasized.

In performing their role as protectors, boys are at times disadvantaged in some agricultural seasons as they are engaged in risky roles like guarding against baboons and monkeys. It was mentioned that boys at times miss school while chasing predators from the gardens. One participant

> "Yes, mostly in June and August, boys don't go to school because they have to help with chasing monkeys and baboons that would come to destroy plants in the gardens. Girls are left out of these because someone could also go and attack them in the bush there so they remain in school" — FGD Adolescent boys (15-17 years), Yumbe

Faith norms further disadvantage women and girls when it comes to resource distribution and use. Even at the father's house, girls don't get an equal share of the land with the boys. This is hard to shift as faith norms tend to support male privilege in resource allocation. Adult males in FGD had this to say;

> "When using land, men always take more portions. And this is even written in the Quran. As a girl, you can access 50% of what boys are accessing because when you get married, you are going to get more access to another 50%. So, in other words, there are gender differences in access and I think it is right" –FGD Males 18-30, Yumbe

The youth in the above discussion continue to ponder the gender differences in accessing, using and control over resources as right. As male youth, the standpoint they occupy may hinder their realization of the challenges such dynamics cultivate for the less privileged. Their privileged position creates a protective gear with the fear that equal participation of the females may affect their opportunities and benefits.

Gender roles distribution also hinders women's active participation. It is socially expected that women perform reproductive roles in the domestic space which restricts their public engagement and participation in productive tasks. Parenting also puts a lot of responsibility on women for instance upbringing of children. Such roles are repetitive and time-consuming, which denies them time to take on public roles including leadership or even trainings. One key informant from Kyegegwa notes;

> "…Yes, domestic work at home. And so, if you do not have time to come to the leadership roles, maybe something else I can add is that women have restrictions from their husbands. So, they fear to maybe to disappoint their group members…You commit yourself to take lead. Tomorrow they are stopping you from going. And generally, also, they also need to seek consent from their husbands." —

The roles are worsened by the expectation of seeking spouses' permission to move out of the home, but also take on leadership responsibilities. Girls' participation is further impacted by divorce and separation of parents resulting from domestic violence. Due to socially ascribed roles, girls have to take on the roles of their mothers when they divorce which halts, especially their educational retention, but also performance. When asked who is affected most due to divorce, the adolescents had this to say.

> "it is girls because when they beat the woman and she divorces, the girl is the one who takes over the woman's roles like cooking, washing dishes, digging, which can lead to dropping out of school"

The roles are worsened by the expectation of seeking spouses' permission to move out of the home, but also take on leadership responsibilities. Social norms impact all aspects of life reflected in various behaviours demonstrated in key social institutions and the social outcomes for the community. Social norms simultaneously create benefits and disadvantages for different social groups through creating social order, guiding conduct and maintaining cooperation among community members by cultivating a sense of predictability. Social norms are evident in gender roles distribution, resource allocation, access, use and control. Norms Influence social interactions for instance due to the patriarchal nature of society gender-based violence has generally been normalized, accepted in community and at times expected for instance among married couples. To a large extent, women and girls have been negatively affected by social norms, although male deviants also encounter sanctions that question their identity. Social norms are strongly built on cultural and religious practices and beliefs that cut across different aspects including health, education, marriage, economic aspects and other aspirations in an individual's life. important to note is that there are some norms that have positive impacts for society, for instance preserving the marriage institute. It is crucial to therefore appreciate both the positive and negative impact social norms present.

3.7.2. Social norms around GBV, and household power

The UNICEF gender-based violence information pack conceptualizes GBV as a term used to describe any harmful act perpetrated against an individual based on socially ascribed/gender differences between males and females[3]. Gender based violence takes different forms, however, it is important to note that the forms are connected and influence each other. GBV can happen in both public and private spaces, by strangers but also by intimates, face-to-face or virtual. The forms are not mutually exclusive and multiple incidences of violence can simultaneously happen and reinforce each other. Such intersections make some individuals more vulnerable to violence than others despite being the same gender. GBV takes physical, sexual, economic and psychological forms. One adolescent clearly elaborates the influence the different forms have on each other

> "By the way for me the same hands that harvest cassava are used to bury babies because when drought kills crops, girls are married off for dowry. When floods come, women trading sex for fish get pregnant with no clinics reachable. We bleed but no one helps us as if we have committed too many sins. Our village motto should be: 'First starve, then suffer, then die silently ehhhhhhhhh" — FGD Adolescent female, Madi Okolo)

Gender based violence is rooted in unequal power relations between women and men which results in discrimination and abuse. Literature demonstrated that while It can affect everyone but women and girls are disproportionately affected (UN Women, 2023). This is worsened in situations of forced displacement (IRC, 2023). In patriarchal societies like Uganda, GBV has in some communities been normalized, accepted and at times expected by both women and men. It is at times engraved in the socialization process hence it becomes internalized by both the victims and perpetrators. It was

[3] https://www.unicef.org/serbia/en/media/16751/file.

revealed in the study that while some men suffer violence, the majority of those affected were women and girls.

3.7.3. Forms of GBV

Across all locations, gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence, is prevalent. This manifests in various forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. Other forms of gender-based violence, such as harmful traditional practices, have been reported at all study sites.

Form	Types	Perpetrator	Survivors
Physical	• Wife beating, torture, • burning of children, • throwing women out of the house, • unlawful taking of the child, • child desertion, • child torture, • trafficking	• Mainly men (husbands and in-laws)	• Women • Children
Psychological	• Threats • Intimidation • Use of abusive language • Threaten to kill • Quarrelling	• Women • Men • Mothers in laws • sisters in law	• Children • Men • Women • Wives • PWDs
Economic	• Confiscation of money • Grabbing of produce • Refusal to go to the market	• Men •	• •
Sexual Harmful practices	• Rape • Defilement • refusal to use SRHR services • Denial of sex • Forced marriages • Early marriages	• Men • • Parents • Relatives	• Women • Girls • • Girls • Boys

Physical violence: This was reported to be common among married couples. In the household survey, forty three percent of the respondents (44.0% of the men and 42.0% of the women) reported knowledge of a woman experiencing physical violence in their communities within the past 12 months (Figure 8). This form of violence was primarily exhibited through slapping, beating, or intimidation by their male partners. Participants noted that these acts of violence are often triggered by disputes over issues such as financial stress, access to food, or perceived disobedience, highlighting the toxic interplay of power and control within intimate relationships.

> "If you are late returning from the market, your husband can slap you and say you were wasting time." — FGD Adult female refugees, Obongi

> "A neighbour was beaten badly because she tried to protect her daughter from being forced to marry." — FGD Adult woman Refugees, Kyegegwa

The above quote illustrates the interconnectedness among the forms of violence. It also shows how different individuals can be vulnerable in different contexts. In trying to prevent sexual violence committed against the daughter through early and forced marriage, the advocate endures physical abuse.

Emotional violence: This manifests in various distressing forms, such as a husband reprimanding his wife using harsh, insulting language or resorting to demeaning comments that undermine her self-worth. Other instances include shouting, berating, and making threats, such as marrying another woman. In some cases, a husband might force his wife to return to her family or place of origin, further isolating her. Respondents also highlighted a strategy referred to as the "cold war" method, employed by both men and women during conflicts. This tactic involves extended periods of silence, where

spouses deliberately ignore one another, creating an atmosphere of emotional distance and unresolved tension. Women, in particular, often face immense pressure from their relatives and children to remain silent about the emotional abuse they endure. This pressure can intensify their desire to maintain a semblance of peace, even if it means suppressing their own feelings and experiences of the emotional violence they face.

In the household survey, 47.2% of the respondents (47.6% of men and 47.2% of women) reported knowledge of a woman experiencing emotional violence within the past 12 months (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Percentage of respondents who reported knowledge of incidences of violence against women in their communities

	n	% respondents who knows of a woman who experienced physical GBV in past 12 months	% respondents who knows of a woman who experienced verbal GBV in past 12 months
Sex of HH head			
Male	500	44.0	47.6
Female	316	42.1	47.0
Age of HH head			
18-30	175	43.0	48.1
31 - 50	404	42.4	46.6
51+	222	43.3	47.2
Head of HH is PwD?			
No	730	43.2	47.9
Yes	86	37.7	37.7
Nationality			
Ugandan	573	44.2	49.4
Refugee	243	39.5	42.0
District			
Adjumani	90	17.8	16.7
Koboko	85	4.7	4.7
Kyegegwa	140	75.7	85.7
Lamwo	91	74.7	79.1
Madi-Okollo	95	48.4	61.1
Moyo	82	26.8	29.3
Obongi	75	84.0	82.7
Terego	78	9.0	15.4
Yumbe	80	21.3	22.5
All	**816**	**42.8**	**47.2**

Sexual violence: Although infrequently reported, some participants indicated that forced sex occurred when the husband had been drinking; others noted that the price women paid for rejecting their husbands' sexual advances included physical violence as well as forced sex. Consequently, women are expected to comply with their husbands' demands, regardless of their own wishes or health conditions.

> "If a woman refuses sex, her husband may force her or beat her." — FGD Adult female refugees, Obongi

> "Some men say a wife cannot deny her husband. If you refuse, they call you disrespectful." — FGD Adult females, Terego

In addition, incidents of sexual violence beyond intimate partner relationships have been reported. Several participants, particularly young girls, described distressing experiences where both close relatives and unfamiliar individuals engaged in such acts of violence.

Overall, Table 3.9 indicates that a substantial percentage of respondents reported knowledge of incidences of physical (42.8% overall) and emotional (47.2% overall) violence against women in their communities over the past 12 months. This underscores that while these figures do not represent direct prevalence, the widespread awareness of such violence points to its normalized and pervasive nature within the study areas, affecting safety and well-being for women and girls.. This could create a stigma that often deters women and girls from seeking medical services or legal redress. In almost every FGD, male and female participants asserted that men do not have the authority to perpetrate violence against their wives. However, in nearly all discussions, both women and men qualified this statement by suggesting that it is acceptable for men to inflict violence against their wives if they are provoked, if the violence committed is 'mild,' or if the violence perpetrated is occasional and does not occur regularly.

Economic violence: This form of violence was reported to be prevalent in refugee-hosting communities and was said to reinforce other forms of violence (e.g., physical, sexual, or emotional violence). It manifests through the control of access to income, food, and other resources. For example, participants reported that women who farm or earn money often have to surrender their earnings to their husbands, who typically use the funds for personal interests.

> "I have no control over the money I earn from the garden. My husband takes it all(Anikuru Farmers Group, Yumbe)

> "No, men have control over most resources while women simply have access; we are just given permission to use the resources " — FGD Women 18-30, Lamwo

This was however, different for the refugees since both men and women could have control, especially over land as long as they bought it through the right channels. Asked whether control varied among the refugee community, one participant said

> "No. its money that speaks here, if a refugee comes and they have money, they can buy and control land here" — FGD, Women 18-30, Lamwo

Harmful practices: Incidences of early and forced marriages are widespread practices in refugee and host communities. Participants noted that there are limited sanctions or censure against parents who marry off their daughters or for adult men who marry children. When early or forced marriage occurs, families tend to agree on compensation or a dowry rather than seek litigation. It was also reported that in rare cases, boys are also forced to marry while still young.

> "In regard to children, it's forced marriage when parents or guardians force their children to marry early because they have developed grown-up bodies. Boys are forced to marry early too, just as girls are married off early " — FGD, Women-Lamwo.

While both girls and boys were sexually harassed through forced early marriages, the reasons were totally different. Girls were for instance married off to get dowry while the boys were married off as a way of getting ownership and control over the resources especially land.

3.7.4. Justifications for GBV

In the study it was noted that GBV is at times used as a way of disciplining women especially those in marriage. In the household survey, 24.3% of respondents justified a woman being beaten for at least one reason. Justification was highest among females from female-headed households (27.4%) and males from MHH (25.1%), and lowest among females from MHH (19.1%). The most commonly accepted reason across all groups was leaving the house without asking for a man's permission (16.8%), followed by failing to care for children (14.5%) and disobeying a male authority (15.2%) (Table 3.10). Further, 32.0% of respondents justified emotional abuse against women for at least one reason. The highest levels of justification were reported among females from female-headed households (33.9%) and males from male-headed households (32.7%), while females from male-headed households reported slightly lower levels at 28.6% (Table 3.10).

Women were also at times blamed for the violence that befalls them. Participants for instance noted that some things women do cause the violence. While perceptions varied, there were instances where it was noted that violence could not be avoided. These included cases of being away from home for long, and returning late. Participants in one of the discussions explained;

> "women are not supposed to be beaten. But there are things that women do and you have to touch her a little so that she can learn…Like you tell her to return early from the market and she comes home at 8pm. She needs to be touched for this"—FGD adolescent males Yumbe.

Table 3.10: Percent of respondents who justifies a woman's beating for at least some reasons

	Sex of respondent			Lots				
	Male from MHH	Female from MHH	Female from FHH	Lot 1	Lot 2	Lot 3	Lot 4	All
n	275	231	310	238	257	181	140	816
Justifies a woman's beating if she:								
• Spoils/burns /fails to cook a meal	9.5	4.8	12.6	18.1	5.1	8.3	3.6	9.3
• Disobeys her husband /uncle/ father /brother	15.6	12.1	17.1	19.7	10.1	20.4	10.0	15.2
• Spends money without asking man	11.6	8.2	16.8	22.3	6.2	15.5	4.3	12.6
• Fails to care well for the children	13.8	12.6	16.5	20.2	10.5	16.6	9.3	14.5
• Leaves a dependent/ill adult unattended	12.0	12.6	15.8	17.2	8.9	18.8	9.3	13.6
• Does not prepare her husband/ uncle/ father/ brother's bath	12.0	6.9	12.9	16.8	5.8	13.8	6.4	10.9
• Fails to fetch water/ firewood for her husband/ uncle/father /brother	12.0	7.4	15.2	20.6	6.2	13.3	5.7	11.9
• Leaves the house without asking for man's permission	18.2	11.3	19.7	20.6	10.5	25.4	10.7	16.8
Justifies a woman's beating for at least one reason	25.1	19.1	27.4	26.5	15.2	38.1	19.3	24.3

Justifications for GBV especially against women are largely rooted in gender norms which permit men to control and dominate their wives while women are expected to be submissive at all times. Men thus evoke their patriarchal power to "discipline" and put women in their right places in case disobedience and disrespect are suspected. While men perpetrate this, the women also accept and justify such violence. The UDHS (2011) indicates that 58% women and 43.7% men aged 15-49, accept that a husband is justified to hit or beat his wife for a number of reasons including but not limited to burning food, arguing with him, going out of home without his permission, and denying him sex.

Table 3.11: Percent of respondents who held an attitude that it is acceptable to harshly criticize or yell at women for at least some reasons

	Sex of respondent			Lots				
	Male from MHH	Female from MHH	Female from FHH	Lot 1	Lot 2	Lot 3	Lot 4	All
n	275	231	310	238	257	181	140	816
Justifies woman's emotional abuse if she:								
• Spoils/burns /fails to cook a meal	22.2	18.2	22.6	23.5	14.8	35.9	10.0	21.2
• Disobeys her husband /uncle/ father /brother	25.1	24.2	26.5	24.4	21.0	40.3	15.7	25.4
• Spends money without asking man	25.1	18.2	28.1	24.4	16.0	40.9	17.9	24.3
• Fails to care well for the children	24.4	22.9	27.1	24.8	20.2	37.6	17.9	25.0
• Leaves a dependent/ill adult unattended	22.9	19.9	25.5	21.4	17.5	38.1	16.4	23.0
• Does not prepare her husband/ uncle/ father/ brother's bath	22.2	16.9	24.2	22.3	14.8	35.9	13.6	21.4
• Fails to fetch water/ firewood for her husband/ uncle/father /brother	22.5	16.5	24.5	23.1	14.8	35.4	13.6	21.6
• Leaves the house without asking for man's permission	26.2	25.1	27.4	23.9	19.5	44.8	19.3	26.3
Justifies woman's emotional abuse for at least one reason	32.7	28.6	33.9	29.0	24.5	54.7	21.4	32.0

As a result of the social, cultural, religious and gender norms, women are expected to tolerate violence. Religion for instance calls for forgiveness and trying to maintain harmony as much as possible. As such abusive partners (majority of who are men) have to be forgiven. Not because they promise change but because religion requires forgiveness. If women are to be socially respected, they ought to demonstrate patience through forgiveness. Asked about accommodating violence by women in one of the FGDs, they responded that those are the real/ideal women expected in families and societies generally;

> "…those are women who are disciplined. Those ones have home training. Everything is not about returning to your parents' home because if you are married, it is supposed to be for life. You see me speaking here, am 17 years old but I have 2 wives. One left because we had a small problem. And am telling you that a woman who leaves her husband's home for her parent home is the one who looks for trouble from the husband. She wants to be looked at as the one of the right sides"—FGD adolescent males Yumbe.

3.7.5. Other drivers and risk factors of GBV

Several drivers and risk factors contributing to GBV were identified. The key drivers that emerged were related to economic hardship, alcohol abuse, marital conflict due to infidelity and family planning usage, social norms that justify violence against women and girls, lack of economic opportunities, experiences of violence in childhood, and weak legal and social support systems. It was also noted that these drivers and risk factors do not act in isolation, but are amplified by other factors. Some of these factors are discussed below:

Weak legal and social support systems: Participants highlighted deficiencies in legal enforcement and social support structures that directly contribute to an environment of impunity surrounding GBV. They expressed concerns that local government bodies, law enforcement agencies, and the formal judicial system often fail to adequately protect survivors or hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. Survivors who attempt to seek justice face a myriad of obstacles that make it exceedingly difficult to report their experiences. These challenges include, but are not limited to, the pervasive social stigma attached to disclosing instances of GBV. Many survivors are deterred from seeking help due to the fear of being judged or ostracized by their communities. Additionally, there is a lack of coordinated support services available to assist survivors. For instance, shelters that offer safe refuge are often limited or entirely unavailable in some districts, leaving many without a safe space to turn to. Furthermore, the deep-rooted cultural beliefs within collectivist societies can complicate the situation. Such beliefs often emphasize the importance of maintaining family unity and discourage individuals from revealing what are considered "private" issues. This cultural pressure can lead survivors to feel isolated and disempowered, preventing them from accessing the assistance they desperately need and ultimately perpetuating the cycle of violence.

> "I don't know whether you heard about Aruba. Like I'm a man, you're my wife, and then when we fight, you're not supposed to report me to the police. In an event where you do that, it brings curse to our children or to something like that. Because of that, you find that women are now suffering without reporting these cases. So, culture gives that advantage to men to involve themselves in GB V , because they know that they are protected by the culture or the Aruba thing"—KII CDO, Terego.

Household conflict: Related to the power imbalance, household conflicts were cited as a significant risk factor contributing to instances of violence within marriages. Participants, including both married women and men, identified actions that angered or displeased the husband as underlying causes of GBV. These actions were often described in terms such as a 'mistake,' 'disobedience,' or infidelity. Some individuals noted that a wife's perceived provocation or failure to adhere to expected behaviours were critical elements leading to IPV, suggesting a troubling notion that women somehow "invited" abuse by not conforming to their husband's expectations. Discussions among participants highlighted the connection between violent incidents and marital discord, particularly in the context of contraceptive

use. For instance, several participants shared experiences where disagreements regarding contraceptive decisions could result in violence.

Economic hardships: Poverty and financial insecurity were identified as risk factors for GBV, including IPV. During FGDs, poverty was linked to both the perpetration of violence and the risk of being a victim of it. For instance, participants noted that when harvests fail, food becomes scarce, or household income diminishes, tension and frustration escalate quickly. Men, traditionally seen as "providers," may feel a loss of status or control—and lash out at wives and children. Women, expected to stretch resources and maintain household well-being, are often scapegoated for circumstances beyond their control. Additionally, some participants observed that limited employment opportunities and the 'idleness' of men contribute to GBV in many of the refugee-hosting communities.

> "When families are under stress from food shortages or loss of income, cases of gender-based violence often rise. Some girls and young women are forced into transactional sex to get money for food, making them more vulnerable to HIV/STIs."—FGD Male refugees, Madi-Okollo

Alcohol abuse: Participants also discussed the connection between alcohol abuse and GBV. Specifically, alcohol use was associated with both the perpetration of violence and the risk of becoming a victim. For instance, alcohol consumption by men was tied to the perpetration of both physical and sexual violence.

> "When my husband drinks, he becomes violent for no reason." — FGD Adult Females, Lamwo
>
> "Most of the fighting happens after the men drink together at the trading center." — FGD Adult Females, Terego
>
> "If he is drunk, even small things become big arguments." — FGD Adult Females, Kyegegwa

Environmental-related risks: The scarcity of resources such as firewood and water pose significant challenges for women and girls, who often bear the primary responsibility for essential tasks like fetching water, collecting firewood, and tending to agricultural fields. These activities frequently take them to remote or isolated areas, where the risk of harassment, assault, and even sexual violence dramatically increases—especially in the wake of climate disruptions like droughts or floods. As climate conditions worsen, the distances to these vital resources can become significantly longer. For example, during periods of severe drought or following devastating floods, women may find themselves traveling far from home, which increases their vulnerability to potential threats. This situation is further complicated by the scarcity of water, firewood, or food, which can heighten tensions within the household. When women return home empty-handed or late due to the challenges posed by environmental changes, they often face the risk of anger, frustration, or even violence from their partners.

3.7.6. Social and gender norms affecting formal reporting against GBV

Social-cultural beliefs dictate that some issues are private and cannot be brought to the public realm. GBV, especially in the domestic space, is one form of such issues. The understanding is that GBV concerns can be privately handled to protect the image of the family and the home of those affected. Otherwise, society categorizes one as a failure. One key informant explained how this belief has challenged initiatives for tackling GBV.

> "Here people think their problems are not supposed to be have been exposed. And then bringing a lot of threats. Even sometimes we find a woman nowadays saying you are just not a woman. How can you report a small issue like this? …The first problem you resolve with your family, the second one with your family, the third one with the family where you are married in. Then the last one, maybe it is reaching now to four, the fourth one, then you say from here whether you take me to heaven because these people are coming to hear our problems. Then it will be like they are also being punished in the right. So, they will not now have that courage of mistreating you because when those ones come now from there, they say, now this lady said

three times in front of all they will find the husband and say, oh, we didn't know that you are bringing our girl to suffer like this"—KII- Terego.

Women are socially expected to demonstrate resilience amidst violence as a way of proving to the community that they are real women, who are easily shaken. This goes beyond the individual woman to involve how she was raised by her family. Frequent report would be interpreted as a demonstration of failure by the woman which impacts her family but also damages the image of the family of the husband. Voicing against violence therefore takes various steps to try to avoid public interference in the private affairs of families.

Norms further dictate that members cooperate and live in harmony with one another. While this is pertinent it hinders voicing against GBV. In the discussions, participants noted that for instance in the case of defilement, it would be hard to report your neighbour's child.

> "Gender norms do affect the GBV reporting like other people. Imagine you have a boy, and I have a daughter. We know each other and we learn that your child is now going through that age and my made my daughter pregnant. How do I report?... In time, when you go ahead, when you refer ahead, it will expose your son or my daughter to another level. Now we come together, we come down, we say the GBV manner, let's come down and understand this GBV manner. You and me, your child and my daughter, as they come together, what do we do? " — KII Religious Leader-Terego.

In order to maintain good neighbourhood relations, participants noted that many cases of GBV are not reported formally. They resort to culturally relevant ways of dealing with the violence which are context specific depending on the form of violence caused.Some sayings forbid neighbors from intervening when couples have issues to resolve.

> "they say that in the issues of two people who have seen each other's nakedness, no one should involve themselves " — FGD Adult Men, Yumbe.

In Kyegegwa district there was a belief that violence (wife beating) meant love from the husband. Women (even when leaders intervened and reported the cases) were reluctant to follow up on violence cases. Consequently, many cases were dropped which hindered efforts against GBV

> "Even when you try to solve, you cannot solve the issue. Find a fight, when you try to solve, you find a woman withdraw from the case, they will not even want to follow. Even if you arrest the man and bring him here, she will not follow. In other cases, women demand for the release of their husbands. The woman keeps coming back and say, I want my husband back" —KII CFPU, Kyegegwa

Following up on cases requires support from the community and family, morally but also financially, which most women lack. Violence, which is misinterpreted to mean love is normalized and so women are actually blamed for reporting their spouses. Having such support would encourage reporting and avoid delays which in most cases sabotages the evidence.

Reported was also hindered by the negative attitude from the service providers. Given the sensitivity of the issues and social sanctions that come with overriding social norms to do with secrecy and privacy, survivors mentioned that at times service providers with limited privacy and confidentiality standards affected the voicing against violence. In a discussion with older men (above 30 years) in Moyo, "poor attitude and lack of confidentiality from service providers, fear of stigma and language barriers" were highlighted as hindering reporting.

Gender based violence is a common occurrence in all regions of the world, which cuts across gender, race, class, age, religion and other identity markers. While all population categories are potential

victims, women and girls are more affected. The intersection of gender and other vulnerabilities including disability and displacement, exacerbates the fate of refugees and other displaced populations. Although it happens at different levels, structural and cultural violence is more evident against women. It manifests through inequalities in education, women-specific health needs, leadership opportunities. To minimize GBV, economic empowerment of women and youth to attain sustainable income generating avenues is key. Key economic resources to consider include land and natural resources.

3.7.7. Response to GBV

Several approaches were identified from the study areas which used to respond to GBV. These included involvement of informal structures like the clan heads, elders, family members and formal structures including local councils, government entities like the community development officers, gender officers, child and family protection unit and generally the police. The informal structures were noted to be more appropriate, approachable and accommodating since they were closer to the communities and gave a holistic view to the violence. These were however, strongly anchored in the social and cultural norms hence at times justifying and sustaining the violence.

> "In our village here, if someone finds your wife with another person, they even start beating her for you"—FGD Males, Moyo)

The formal structures were on the other hand, were distantly located from the communities, have official working hours and at times charge survivors to offer redress to violence. In one of the discussions with women from Yumbe, they noted

> "It's not good. The LCs say the stamp needs money, so you need to pay 5,000 Shs before anything"—
>
> "I agree, it's not good. The police, before you are helped, you must pay some money"—.

Women and youth-led initiatives against GBV: Amidst the challenging situations, local communities especially in hard-to-reach areas have come up with socially sustainable ways to prevent GBV. With limited government support and unfulfilled promises, girls and women have devised ways to minimize violence against girls.

> "We girls have developed secret signals tying a red cloth on the market place means 'dangerous man nearby.' When we see new fishermen buying school uniforms, we warn through church choir songs and also older women pretend to be aunties to interrupt suspicious conversations at water points. These tricks have stopped more assaults than the police ever have"—FGD Adolescents-Madi-Okollo

While formal systems and structures are failing the girls through charging fees to file cases and do the necessary investigations, girls have resorted to self-censure in form of limited movement and keeping inside in the evening hours. Adolescents from Madi-Okollo, amidst frustration had this to say.

> "We are told to report violence- but to who? The police chief whom you report to will also ask money from you to go and investigate. The health workers who are supposed to help us shout at us if we go for health things and they see our age is still young we don't have places that are safe anymore. They only thing we are trying is to make sure late evenings don't find you out."—

3.7.8. SHRH norms and practices

The study revealed how communities guard against sexual immorality especially among the young people using cultural norms. Gender specific shelters were mentioned as training camps were young women and men are confined to orient them into adulthood and marriage and avoid having sexual relations.

> "In the culture, socially, we advise male youths to stay to sleep in the house of males. Girls also sleep in the house of girls. Why? Because by that age, they have feelings which can influence them to do bad things. When those feelings come, they control. They are trained to care for

their room. They will introduce the mother or the aunt, so that it contains only the female. They can ask questions and get answers." —

3.7.9. Reference groups influencing conformity

In maintaining social norms and affecting behavioural change, individual decisions are based on the approval and support of key reference groups within the community. Reference groups are key influencers in decision making at various levels- individual, household and community levels. These groups have power, resources and knowledge relating to various aspects of social and cultural norms. Reference groups thus refer to others whose opinions, thoughts, behaviours and expectations are considered when deciding to either participate or not in a particular behaviour (UNICEF, 2021). The reference groups thus change from one behaviour to the next. In the study, several reference groups were identified including brother's in law, mothers in law, other married women, Police, Church leaders, Local leaders, clan leaders, and parents.

A detailed breakdown of the specific behavior and reference groups are given in table below.

Behaviour	**Reference group**
Reporting GBV	• Brother's in law, • mothers in law, • other married women • Police • Church leaders • Local leaders
Switching gender roles	• Other married men, • family members, • Religious leaders • Elders • Church members
Submission to men (fathers and husbands)	• Religious leaders,
Decision making in the household	• Family members • Parents • Other husbands • Clan leaders

A further analysis of the reference groups demonstrates that (adult) men dominate these groups. They have the power, and the resources within the community. For sustainable behavioural change initiatives, it is necessary to engage and work with these groups. Reference groups appreciation of change is key to community/society embracing and sustaining the acquired change.

3.7.10. Sanctions for deviating

Deviation from socially expected norms normally caused negative repercussions for the deviant individuals but also collectively families. It was clear that sanctions are more prevalent on injunctive norms which are based on societal standards for how people are expected to behave. literature demonstrates that sanctions can take various forms including verbal and non-verbal and from disapproval to ostracism (Dougla et. al, 2024). Sanctions refer to any reactions to norm transgressions that punish individuals for engaging in counter-normative behaviour (ibid) with the aim of reinstating and sustaining pro-social norm behaviour.

Participants noted that it mainly affects their sense of belonging as well as identity. For instance, when it comes to men performing women's roles like cooking, washing clothes, it normally happens in new marriages but changes as husbands get influenced by other men. Men fear losing their position in society as powerful and thus have to be served by a woman within the home and they are so mindful of how other society members will perceive of it.

> "… with the mentality of men in this village, I think a few can do that because they will be fearing what other people who see them will say as they have it in mind that these domestic chores are women work…They will even feel ashamed to do such things because of what the community will say or their fellow men when they see them" — FGD Adult Women- Madi-Okollo

It was further noted that in such instances fellow men may start treating men who do domestic work as less of men, describing them as bewitched and thus not fit to meet and discuss with fellow men.

Men and women who Interswitch roles are looked at as out of their mind and thus should not be used as role models, and unworthy of serving in leadership positions. in a discussion with adult women from Madi-Okollo, the following voices came out;

> "They would say he has been bewitched by the wife that's why he is doing women work." —

> "They would say he has brain problems / is lame in brain as no man in his normal senses would do women roles in the presence of their wife and yet the woman is not sick" —

> "Some would go to the extent of insulting him of being a disgrace to humanity just for sharing responsibilities with his wife. " —

Such verbal utterances can greatly impact the divergent man's sense of identity and belonging which can further affect their participation in community activities and programs. consequently, they are likely to withdraw in order to assume their position in society. Participants however, noted that for sanctions to matter, it would depend on who has given the sanctions and whether the deviant person respects them.

> "It will depend on whose opinions matter most to him because if he respects and takes the opinions of his wife, he will not mind of the opinions of his friends and other outsiders but continue to help the wife" —

Women who take on leadership roles face criticism from men for being "too much" and unable to sustain marriages. Being *"too much"* means they are challenging the status quo and trying to occupy spaces they know they should not occupy including having public discussions, working in the company of men, moving at strange hours and generally deciding for the community.

Social norms are diverse and vary across regions and cultures. Social norms greatly impact all aspects of human life including health, income generation and general resource distribution, access, use and control, family dynamics, climate change, agricultural. The study confirmed that social norms disproportionately disadvantage women and girls through gender-based violence, limited education opportunities, economic dependency on men and limited political participation and decision making. Given their role, understanding social norms is key while designing, implementing and evaluating interventions for community development. it is crucial that project staff, government entities, civil society organizations, and local leaders (cultural and religious, and other key reference groups) work in partnership to provide holistic strategies for sustainable social and behavioral change.

3.8. Laws, policies, and institutional practices

3.8.1. Existing laws and policies on gender equality

GBV is one of the most widely spread and socially tolerated human rights violations. In Uganda, NGOs, police and human rights defenders confirm it's a critical national problem presenting long-term negative impacts (physical, sexual, economic and psychological wellbeing of the survivors. The government of Uganda has taken steps to minimize GBV. In 2016, a policy on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence in Uganda was established which promotes male engagement as key reference groups for prevention and responding to GBV. This followed prior commitments through the Domestic Violence Act 2010 and its regulations 2011. The regulations provide guidance to duty bearers on what and how to handle GBV while emphasising protection of right holders. Other frameworks demonstrating government of Uganda commitment to end GBV are; the Penal Code Act (2007), Children's Act Amendment (2016), The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2009 and its regulations 2013, Trafficking in Persons Act, (2009) The Employment Act 2006 and policies such as the Uganda Gender Policy (2007). Below is a breakdown of government initiatives and the key provisions they focus on.

Frameworks	Key Provisions
The Penal Code Act (2007)	Criminalizes sexual offenses including rape and defilement
Domestic Violence Act (2010)	Denotes domestic violence in all its forms (physical, psychological, sexual, economic) punishable and makes provisions for fines and imprisonment
The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010)	Criminalizes FGM, Provides for prosecution and punishment of offenders Provides for protection of victims and those under threat
The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2010)	Eliminates trafficking in persons Provides for punishment of perpetrators provides for compensation of victims
Employment Act 2006	Criminalizes sexual harassment at the workplace. Calls for positive measures to prevent and report sexual harassment at the workplace
Disability Act (2020)	Calls for respect and promotion of the fundamental & other human rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities
Uganda Gender Action Plan for women, peace and security (2021-2025)	Ensures women's meaningful participation in peace and development processes, preventing violence and strengthening institutional mechanisms for gender equality.
National Gender Policy	Addressing gender inequalities at all levels of government and by all stakeholders.
National Policy on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence (GBV) 2016, revised 2019	Promotes prevention, response and ending impunity of Gender Based Violations in the country.
Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)	Creates awareness of acts, practices, usage, customs, tradition or cultures that undermine equal opportunities, gender equality, treatment in employment, education, social and cultural construction of roles and responsibilities in society. Examines laws, policies, cultures, traditions, that may hinder equal opportunities and gender equality and enjoyment of human rights.

3.8.2. Awareness and application of CSA and gender policies

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. The government of Uganda has an integrated approach to climate change elaborated in the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2015. Climate change is prioritized in the National Development Plans (2020/21-2024/25), and Vision 2040 is aligned and harmonized with the development of Uganda's long-term climate strategy 2050. Vision 2040 acknowledges the impact climate change has on all sectors of Uganda's economy, and calls for preparedness through adaptation and mitigation strategies to ensure resilience in case of adverse climate change impact. The strategies to achieve this include clear pathways, for instance the climate change resilient and low carbon climate development pathway, was set out in the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP). The study participants demonstrated awareness of CSA, as well as its application in daily livelihood strategies, which they understand to mean different things including "tree keeping, ecotourism, agro-processing, reclaiming of wetlands, mushroom growing and then marketing of the produce.

The participants were aware of CSA practices and structures especially implemented through the government structure

> "We have government structures. Right away from the district environment and natural resources office, the district environment office, the forestry office, we go to the sub-counties, we have sub-counties agriculture extension officers, the senior assistant secretaries of sub-counties, the CDOs. So, these people are actually responsible to cascade information on environment and weather changes to the communities, but also to set regulations on proper management of the natural resources, like stopping the communities from encroaching on the wetlands, from cutting down trees—KII Kyegegwa

A number of challenges were mentioned as hindering the realization and implementation of the policies. It was mentioned that many of the policies are still only available in English without even a bridge version in the local languages, which calls for translation and eventual distortion and misinterpretation. Consequently, the illiterate, majority of who are women are unable to engage with the policies. It is even worse for other vulnerable groups for instance the people living with disabilities for instance the blind and the deaf, as braille and sign language are hardly available.

> "Issues of the language are critical, sometimes communication barriers come on board. And when you are trying to pass, of course translation and the rest of the things come, but there is always information lost in the process. And also, the issues of translations of some of these policies that actually protect gender issues " — KII-Implementing Partner; Madi-Okollo

Having policies in English creates concerns of communities not identifying with such policies but also not being able to refer to them in case they are faced with situations. It also makes policies limited to the educated few, which hinders impact.

There are also concerns relating to the attitude of the local population which at times is so conservative and negative to change irrespective of what it may be. Participants mentioned that some members of the community are so rigid to change and they try to pass on such attitudes to demoralize those who are open to new behaviour.

Although the Government of Uganda has prioritised the climate sector and developed the National Climate Policy (2015), the National Climate Change Act, 2021, the Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy, 2017/18 – 2030/31 and prioritised climate change in its National Development Plans, their translation into practice is constrained by limited awareness of the policies, funding inadequacies and institutional capacities. Implementation of these policies and regulations has also not benefited from systematic integration of social norm change and gender transformative programming that would contribute to gender transformative climate smart agricultural interventions being implemented particularly at the local government and community level.

3.8.3. Functionality of local institutional mechanisms

The study revealed that local institutional mechanisms played a great role in community organization and development although amidst challenges. Common local institutions included local councils, cultural leaders, religious institutions, environmental committees, local courts.

> "The extension services that the agriculture extension officer moves to the grassroots communities, sensitizing and also giving out some of the inputs to the communities. But also, some NGOs have done linkages. Some service providers move back to the villages, distributing these inputs –KII-Kyegegwa".

While the extension workers do their part, there are challenges with affordability of CSA as one of the glaring gaps.

> "There is limited funding. I was just talking about climate smart agriculture, but we really need to know that climate smart agriculture is quite expensive if we need it to be sufficient".

Local administrative units have in some areas come with bylaws to attend to context specific challenges, which participants explained as being progressive. Bylaws are supported at sub-county and community level to ensure that, for example, stray animals are managed. There are also ordinances which include ordinances, for example, the forest conservation ordinances in Madi-Okollo intended to control charcoal burning and the production ordinance. One key informant elaborates more on the production ordinance;

> "Production ordinance is actually the one that is helping us in regards to agriculture. Because then it handles quite a number of issues of how land is utilized and how do we practice this and how do we protect some of the trees from this burning and the rest of the other things"

There are, however, limitations, especially when it comes to SRH. The cultural and religious leaders as well as local leaders are all quiet about these issues which greatly affects the children. The adolescents noted that they only hear about SRH from schools where they are taught about body changes.

3.8.4. Barriers in law, policy, or practice for vulnerable groups

There are gender inequalities in distribution of land. Women and girls, as well as young men are disadvantaged while the older men benefit through uncontrolled access to and use of land, as well as its ownership. Customary policies for instance dictate that older men are the guardians of the land. They decide who uses the land, how much land they require and what for. One participant from Yumbe explained.

> "Although the law recognizes customary tenure and it says as long as it doesn't deprive women and children from accessing, then this is not implemented on real grounds. People are still stuck on the cultures and traditions that say women are supposed to own land. Even those who allow them to, there is no equality there. Like they bring it, for example, if there are three girls and one boy, they will put instead, let me say, if it's four quarters, the family has three girls and one boy, they will give even one quarter to the girls. Yes. Then the three will be for the boy. Like there is really no equality in distribution. Much as some families or some cultures have moved to recognize that women can, but then there is no equality in distribution of the land. Also, to add to what you are saying, I've seen in Uganda, girls get half of what boys get" –KII PICOT YUMBE

There is limited funding to sustain behavioural change programs. In Kyegegwa it was noted the abolition of funding from the US affected the projects especially on health and the refugee communities. The policies are there but how to implement them becomes a problem.

Although reporting is key for seeking justice, it was reported that the courts are overwhelmed and the backlog is too big. Consequently, suspects stay in prison for long before judgement.

CSA has increased production but this has not been matched by the necessary market. Marketing has thus turned out to be a problem for the producers. The market search has let to carrying produce to different markets. This comes with transport costs and if the land was hired, then a lot of expenses are incurred thus affecting the profitability of the produce.

> "So, they take it to different markets, where they may not sell it within one day. It may take some days for the product to get finished. And also, in terms of transporting, by the time you keep putting your money on transporting here and there, you'll find you'll have really wasted" — KII CFPU, Kyegegwa.

For vulnerable populations like PWDs, and women, this creates new forms of vulnerabilities including resulting in domestic violence and abuse. The PWDs tend to be left out of the marketing season due to challenges with movement.

There are challenges with adaptability to new ways of practicing agriculture. This was attributed largely to knowledge gaps among women and youth, as well as challenges to do with limited resources including money and skills but also land.

> "Women and youth are also linked with issues of knowledge gaps. Knowledge gaps on issues of climate smart agriculture, resilience, particularly the modern knowledge in this regard. But the traditional knowledge is also shaded away" — KII- Implementing Partner

Government programs are inclusive considering women, youth and PWDs. They target farmers with land and fulfil the requirements.

> "The government frameworks are inclusive, they don't segregate. Much as they don't give special attention to a certain marginalized group" –KII Kyegegwa

The government of Uganda is progressive on issues of gender equality and climate change. Gender equality is advocated for through education and leadership with 30% mandatory representation at all levels of leadership. Despite the good will of the government, community perceptions and attitudes still pause a big challenge for realization of intended goals. Holistic multisectoral approaches targeting behavioural and mindset change are key for practicalisation of local and national policies, approaches and frameworks. It is imperative that government works in collaboration with informal systems and structures for instance the cultural leaders, religious leaders and locally respected systems like clan systems and family systems to sensitize and embrace positive change relating to gender, human rights, climate change and inclusivity.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

Climatic shocks, including severe droughts, sudden floods, prolonged dry spells, and irregular rainfall, have disrupted the timing of traditional farming, damaged food supplies and undermining the resilience of both refugee and host families. These impacts do not affect everyone equally. Women who grow food and still handle most of the unpaid caregiving responsibilities face increased workloads and greater risks. Yet, despite their significant contributions, their voices are seldom included in plans for adapting to a changing climate. Deep-rooted gender norms exclude them from decision-making spaces where their needs should take priority. When crises occur, families resort to quick fixes such as cutting meals, borrowing food or cash, selling tools, or seeking casual work-choices that disproportionately impact women and girls and reinforce existing insecurities. The unpredictable weather patterns tend to affect men and women quite differently; women who trek long distances to water sources during the long unexpected drought they are more vulnerable to increased risks exposed to risks of violence in its various forms (physical., emotional and even sexual violence). The opportunity cost for coping with climate vagaries through walking long distances in search of essential items like water reduces time available to engage for women to engage in alternative livelihood activities to sustain livelihoods. It increases their time poverty. Women are often left behind to grow crops, care for children and be the head of household head which creates - additional stress. It means families are disrupted. During severe climate changes, children especially girls are taken out leading to high levels of absenteeism and drop out of school. Unpredictable weather patterns and climate vagaries also affect the ability of men to effectively fulfil their roles as provider and breadwinner for the family and this negatively affect relationships between men and women. Men may become frustrated for failure to fulfil their roles and may resort to violence to assert their position in the household.

The findings reveal a persistent and unequal gender split in daily work, shaped by long-standing beliefs about what constitutes an "ideal" woman or man. Women and girls tend to bear almost all the unpaid care work, including cooking, cleaning, hauling water and firewood, caring for children, and managing the household, while also undertaking many farm tasks. Balancing these roles leaves them perpetually short on time, limiting their opportunities to earn income, participate in climate-smart training, or take on leadership roles within the community. In contrast, men have significantly more freedom to engage in visible market work, lead community meetings, and occupy decision-making positions. This disparity traps women in a cycle where their contributions sustain households, yet the system consistently grants men access to opportunities that foster resilience and economic independence. Observing workloads through the seasons highlights the gap even further. During peak planting or harvest periods, women's hours in the field increase notably, yet their household chores and the time they require remain unchanged. Adolescent girls are often pulled out of school to compensate for this imbalance, jeopardizing their education and future empowerment. Ultimately, these pressures gradually erode women's sense of control and voice.

In relation to access to and control over productive resources including land, inputs, training, and financial services, findings show that these remains deeply unequal across gender, age, refugee status. While land access is relatively widespread among host communities, it is highly constrained among refugees, particularly women. In many refugee contexts, land is either communally assigned or informally borrowed, leading to tenure insecurity and dependency on male household heads or host community gatekeepers. Gendered norms further restrict women's ability to claim or control land, even when they are the primary agricultural laborers. In addition, women and marginalized groups are significantly disadvantaged in accessing improved seeds, farming tools and extension services. When such resources are available, men tend to control their use and determine who in the household participates in related trainings or input fairs. Even in settings where women are active in farming groups, they often lack decision-making authority over how inputs are distributed or used. This dynamic

reduces the potential efficiency and equity of CSA interventions and reinforces male control over productive assets.

Access to comprehensive, quality SRHR information and services remains inconsistent and inequitable across refugee and host communities particularly for women, adolescents, and persons with disabilities. Remote areas continue to face significant logistical challenges that limit the consistent delivery and accessibility of SRHR services. Geographic isolation, combined with inadequate infrastructure and staffing, restricts service coverage in underserved regions. Marginalised groups, particularly adolescents and persons with disabilities, remain disproportionately underserved, creating barriers to equitable access to vital SRHR interventions. Adolescents, for instance, face stigma and cultural resistance when accessing family planning and contraceptive services, while persons with disabilities encounter physical and systemic barriers to care, including inaccessible health facilities and limited trained personnel to address their specific needs. Women and girls also have limited decision-making power over their own reproductive health, often requiring spousal or family approval to seek services.

Gender-based violence remains pervasive across all study locations, manifesting in physical, emotional, economic, and sexual forms. It is both a symptom and a tool of patriarchal control, deeply embedded in social norms, economic dependency, and unequal power relations at household and community levels. Women and girls, particularly adolescent girls, female-headed households, and PWDs are at heightened risk. The risks intensify during climate-induced shocks, where scarcity of food, water, and income triggers domestic tensions and exposes women to exploitation and abuse, especially when traveling long distances for basic resources.

4.2. Recommendations

1. Knowledge and adoption of CSA and environmental management practices are low across the URRI districts, with notable gender disparities. Therefore, implementing targeted gender-transformative activities can enhance inclusive access to CSA and environmental management knowledge, information, technologies, and services.

Action areas

- Integrate gender transformative and social inclusion guidelines in activities aimed at strengthening local governance structures' capacity (knowledge, skills, and appropriate tools), and targeted refugees and refugee-affected communities to effectively engage in natural resource and ecosystem protection, restoration, and management. These activities should ensure that women, youth, PwDs, and refugees equitably and meaningfully engage in natural resource and ecosystem protection, restoration, and management
- Integrate gender transformative approaches in interventions to promote engagement of women, men, youth, and PwDs in refugee-affected areas in regenerative livelihoods activities. These activities should address harmful gender norms and structural barriers that negatively affect meaningful engagement of women, PwDs, youths, and refugees in regenerative livelihood activities.
- Integrate gender transformative and social inclusion guidelines in activities aimed at strengthening anticipatory capacity of communities to mitigate climate and environmental shocks, which can disrupt agricultural production. This should include co-designed gender sensitive preparedness plans, inclusive risk mapping, and gender transformative activities that ensure women, youth, refugees, and PwDs are meaningfully engaged in preparedness and early warning system activities

2. Across all URRI districts, women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic, caregiving, and agricultural labor, which limits their access to CSA and environmental management trainings, income-generating activities, and leadership opportunities. Men's roles are often narrowly defined as providers or authority figures, restricting their involvement in

caregiving and other household chores. Therefore, it is necessary to build on lessons learned from implementing male engagement strategies. Lessons can be drawn from programs successfully implemented in Uganda and other Eastern African countries, such REAL Fathers, and Transforming Masculinities, to foster shared caregiving, joint decision-making, and positive masculinity.

Action areas

- Integrate gender transformative approaches in interventions aimed at promoting engagement of women, men, youth and PwDs in refugee-affected areas in regenerative livelihoods activities. These activities should address harmful gender norms and structural barriers that negatively affect meaningful engagement of women, PwDs, youths and refugees in regenerative livelihood activities.
- Facilitate community and household dialogues, including intergenerational conversations and couple sessions, to address entrenched norms on care work, promote equitable labor distribution, and encourage joint household planning.
- Recruit and train male and female champions and elders as peer educators and public advocates for gender-equitable relationships.
- Promote the use of energy-saving technologies, such as fuel-efficient cookstoves, to reduce women's cooking time and enable their participation in CSA training.

3. Decision-making on land use, farming practices, and income remains largely male-dominated. Limited CSA and environmental management knowledge, time poverty, restricted mobility, and limited literacy reinforce women's exclusion. At community level, leadership structures are similarly skewed. Although women report being members in local groups, their leadership is limited to low positions. Older men often lead key farmer and environmental committees, reinforcing gender and age-based exclusion. Therefore, there is need to enhance women's agency and leadership in household and community decision-making through targeted empowerment, gender-transformative training, and institutional inclusion mechanisms.

Action areas

- Develop and implement gender-transformative and social inclusion guidelines to integrate into activities aimed at increasing the involvement and participation of women and youth in leadership and decision-making processes related to CSA, climate change adaptation, and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources.
- Integrate gender transformative and social inclusion approaches that address power imbalances, harmful gender norms, and social exclusion of women, youth, PwDs, and refugees in activities to establish and strengthen sustainable community structures for environmental and natural resource protection and restoration. These approaches should focus on removing barriers and increasing opportunities to promote equitable participation of women, men, youth, PwDs, and refugees in the creation of ENRM structures, as well as in the development and enforcement of by-laws and ordinances for environmental and natural resource protection and restoration.
- Promote of women's group structures as information & power hubs to; disseminate CSA, market, and environmental protection information, build leadership skills, initiate peer-to-peer mentorships, as well as linking groups to extension service providers, inputs, and financial services

4. GAP findings show that men dominate control over critical productive assets, including land, livestock, finance, and agri-technologies. Men are also more likely to receive key climate and environmental information and services. Women's access to productive assets is hindered by time poverty, low literacy, and gendered mobility restrictions, among other factors. Therefore, there is a need to address gendered barriers in asset access and control by designing and implementing gender-transformative interventions aimed at increasing women's direct

ownership, decision-making power, and use of knowledge, technologies, and finances across CSA, market, and environment management systems.

Action areas

- Integrate gender transformative activities (power analysis, gender roles, and intra-household decision-making) and social inclusion in VSLA methodology, financial literacy and marketing of proceeds from production targeting farmers and Farmer Groups.
- Mainstream Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in regenerative CSA input and output market activities to increase the participation of small-scale farmers, including women, youth, PwDs, and refugees, in the target communities.
- Develop and integrate gender transformative and social inclusion guidelines to address barriers and harness opportunities for women, men, PwDs, and youth to meaningfully engage in off-farm nature-based and climate-adaptive enterprises and income-generating activities.
- Work with local leaders and refugee welfare committees to support communal land use agreements or gender-responsive land leasing mechanisms that explicitly include female headed HHs and youth-headed households
- Leverage information channels accessible to women, men, youth, and PwDs (e.g., women's groups, faith-based institutions, market days, road drives, and community radio in local dialects)

5. Across all URRI districts, women, youth, and persons with disabilities consistently express strong aspirations for economic independence, self-determination, and personal dignity. These include ambitions to start or grow businesses, engage in value-added agriculture, pursue education, and improve their families' futures. However, systemic barriers such as limited access to finance, training, markets, land, and mentorship continue to constrain the realization of these aspirations, especially for refugee and young women. There is a need to unlock the economic potential of women, youth, and PwDs by translating these aspirations into viable, sustainable livelihoods through capacity building, inclusive financing, market access, and skills development initiatives.

Action areas

- Develop and integrate gender transformative and social inclusion guidelines to address barriers and harness opportunities for women, men, PwDs, and youth to meaningfully engage in off-farm nature-based and climate-adaptive enterprises and income-generating activities.
- Facilitate access to seed funding, village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), and group-based lending models specifically for women led enterprises and youth groups
- Support women, youth, and PwDs to access value chains through improved storage, processing, and marketing infrastructure
- Establish mentorship programs connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with successful women and youth business owners or professionals to build confidence, networks, and resilience

6. The GAP also reveals that harmful social and gender norms influence decision-making about sexual and reproductive health within households. Women, especially those who are married, are expected to seek their husbands' permission before accessing services like family planning, HIV testing, or antenatal care. Young women and adolescent girls face additional challenges of control and fear, driven by community norms that link SRH agency with promiscuity or disobedience. Therefore, there is a need to adapt approaches based on evidence of what works to promote positive social and cultural norms and practices, and increase access to SRHR information and services. Consider approaches such as the SASA model or REAL Fathers, and adapt these to the context of URRI project implementation.

Action areas

- Conduct gender-transformative dialogue sessions with men, women, elders, and religious leaders to unpack power dynamics in SRH decision-making and promote shared responsibility in health-seeking.

- Implement couple-based learning sessions and establish male role models who support equitable SRH practices and destigmatize women's independent access to health services
- Support creation of girls' clubs, mentorship circles, and safe spaces that allow adolescent girls to share, learn, and build confidence around their sexual health choices

7. Barriers including negative provider attitudes toward adolescents, unmarried women, and PwDs limit equitable SRHR access in URRI districts. Inaccessible facilities, long distances, unreliable supply chains, and social norms further complicate access. Limited youth-friendly spaces increase stigma, while frequent stock-outs of essential services erode trust in the health system. To improve access, it is essential to enhance provider responsiveness, redesign service delivery, and adopt youth-sensitive approaches. URRI can leverage existing interventions like the Strengthening Adolescents and Youth (SAY) Program in Uganda.

Action areas

- Leverage SAY's approach to adolescent SRHR, especially its emphasis on safe spaces, non-judgmental care, peer-led demand generation, and facility redesign. URRI should collaborate with SAY actors (e.g., UNFPA, MoH Adolescent Health Division) to co-locate youth-friendly corners within existing health facilities, integrate SRHR into community youth clubs, and train peer educators to address stigma and boost SRH literacy.
- Expand training for healthcare providers, especially in refugee and remote host settings, on gender, inclusion, disability sensitivity, and youth-centered care. Integrate client feedback loops (e.g., scorecards, complaint desks) to reinforce behavior change.
- Align URRI's advocacy efforts with existing programmes such as SAY and MoH partners to jointly address systemic SRHR stock-outs, as well as adolescent-focused SRH information materials.
- Collaborate with local health providers to increase access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for women and girls.

8. Harmful social and cultural norms, like GBV tolerance, early marriage, and restrictive gender roles, persist in URRI-targeted communities. Norms of silence justify violence, including physical punishment of women who disobey their husbands. These norms promote private resolution of GBV to protect family honor, limiting survivor agency and discouraging reporting. Adolescent girls, women with disabilities, and female-headed households face heightened risks, especially during climate shocks that increase resource scarcity and domestic tension. To address these issues, there is a need to adapt approaches that have proven effective in promoting positive social and cultural norms and practices and preventing and responding to harmful social and gender norms related to women's safety. Approaches such as the SASA model or REAL Fathers should be considered and tailored to fit the context of URRI project implementation.

Action areas

- Include as part of the social and behavioural change strategy key activities aimed at promoting social and gender norms change leveraging effective models such as SASA! Model and REAL Fathers.
- Conduct community-based dialogue campaigns and peer engagements on gender-based violence and sexual harassment, challenging harmful gender norms and promoting respect for women's rights.
- Promote collective agency through identifying existing or establishing platforms and supportive spaces (physical or online) for women and adolescent girls' groups for solidarity, peer-to-peer support, and learning and GBV/SRHR information, which are open to women/adolescent girls' coalitions/networks/groups
- Work with CP (SGBV) actors to identify all the referral pathways for SGBV survivors in the community for service mapping.

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ANNEXES

Annex I: Detailed tables and data visualizations

Gender Time series/roles analysis: FGD Males, 18-30 years, Yumbe

Time	Men	Women	boys	girls
6am-7am	• Praying	• Praying • Sweeping the compound	• Praying • Digging	• Praying • Sweeping
8am-9am	• Digging • •	• Preparing breakfast • Digging • Weeding • Washing clothes	• School • Digging • Grazing animals •	• Preparing breakfast • school •
10am-11am	• Digging •	• Digging • Weeding • Planting	• Digging • Grazing animals • School	• Clearing garden • Planting • School
12pm-1pm	• Resting and eating • Personal cleaning	• Cooking • Resting • Eating • Cleaning children	• Resting • Lunch • Personal cleaning	• Cooking • School • Resting
2pm-3pm	• Resting • Walking to the trading center	• Taking a nap • Collecting firewood	• School • Grazing animals	• School • Resting • Collecting firewood
4pm-5pm	• Casual labour • Relaxing with friends at the trading center	• Collecting firewood • Relaxing • Cooking • Weeding	• school • grazing animals • relaxing with friends	• collecting firewood • cooking • weeding
6pm-7pm	• Planting • Digging • Walking back home	• Cooking • Weeding • Cooking	• Digging • Planting • Grazing animals	• Cooking
8pm-9pm	• Eating • sleeping	• eating • sleeping	• personal cleaning • eating • sleeping	• eating • sleeping

Gender Time series/roles analysis: FGD adolescent boys, 15-17 years), Kyegegwa

TIME	MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS
5:00am – 6:00am	• Washing the face, • Milking cows, • Checking on how the animals slept • Slaughtering animals	• Preparing tea • Sweeping or mopping • Washing utensils • Ironing children's uniforms • Preparing children for school • Fetching water	• Helping their mothers to fetch water • Checking how the goats slept • Milking cows • Taking animals to the grazing fields • Washing the face • Greeting the parents • Ironing uniforms and going to school • Polishing shoes • Work (electrical wiring)	• Sweeping • Washing utensils • Bathing • Ironing boys' uniform • Planning to cook • Prepare for school • Taking out the bedding • Warming the water for bathing
7:am – 8:00am	• Go for work • Digging • Washing their faces • Teaching children (in school)	• Warming food. • Taking food for those people who are in the garden • Escorting children to school • Mopping the house • Sweeping the compound • Eating breakfast • Checking if the workers have gone to the garden • Looking for what to cook for children	• Grazing animals • Milking cows • Going to work (at the garage) • Going to school • Going to the garden • Checking on the animals • Feeding the hens • •	• Sweeping • Preparing breakfast • Fetching water • Peeling matooke • Going to work (tailoring) • Cooking food • Eating breakfast • Taking food for the people who have gone to the garden •
9:00am – 10am	• drying crops • digging • going to pay school fees • splitting firewood • taking care of pigs • checking on the goats • construction works	• Taking food for the children who are at school • Finishing to sweep • Digging • Those with saloon businesses be plaiting hair •	• Playing football • Eating food • Digging • Eating food • Grazing animals • Monitoring servants digging in the garden	• Finished cooking • Finished sweeping • Taking food for workers • Looking for what to prepare for lunch • Washing dishes • Washing clothes

	• taking care of banana plantation • opening the shops • going to the garden • going to the church • working at the garage (welding doors) • opening the shops • walking to the garden • cutting grass for roofing		• Taking cows to drink water	•
11:00am - 12:00am	• Returning from the garden • Bathing, going to the center to socialize • Taking care of animals • Going to open their businesses • Grazing cattle and giving them water • Eating lunch	• Eating lunch • Coming from the garden • Cooking lunch • Opening their businesses • Looking for vegetables • Going to the group meetings	• Taking cows to drink water • Grazing animals • Washing their clothes • Eating lunch • Fetching firewood • Constructing a drying rack • Hunting •	• Winnowing beans • Peeling • Watching football • Sweeping the compound • Weaving mats • Washing clothes • Bathing •
1:00PM-2:00PM	• Preparing to go and support football • Watching video • Preparing to go and socialize • Eating lunch • Resting • Drying beans or coffee	• Winnowing beans • Preparing lunch • Bathing and going to socialize • Going to group meetings • Preparing supper • Preparing lunch for children to eat after school • returning from work	• Resting • Going to play football • Eating lunch • Taking cows to drink water • Pounding beans • bathing •	• Resting • Preparing lunch • Going for tailoring • Washing clothes • •
3:00pm – 4:00pm	• Going to work in the garden for evening • Going to socialize • Grazing animals • Milking • Cleaning the well • Working at their businesses	• Preparing supper • Collecting vegetables • Going to the saloon • Bathing • •	• Digging in the evening • Playing football • Visiting friends • Taking care of livestock • Going for boda boda business • Going to town to socialize	• Preparing supper • Collecting vegetables • Gardening in the evening • Going to the market to sell clothes • jogging •
5:00pm - 6:00pm	• Going to socialize • Bathing and sleeping as they wait for supper • Returning from work • Milking • Drinking alcohol • Working in the plantation • Returning from grazing animals	• Preparing supper • Returning from evening gardening • Bathing • Returning from work • Washing clothes • Drinking porridge • Returning from businesses	• Returning from grazing • Playing football • Socializing • Returning from the garage •	• Eating supper • Sweeping the compound • Socializing • Bathing • Taking evening tea • Preparing to sleep
7:00pm-8:00pm	• Getting their animals from the forest • Going to bed • Listening to news on the radio • Going to socialize • Coming back from supporting football • Watching movies from the movie rooms	• Laying beds • Serving supper • Boiling tea • Going to socialize • Sleeping •	• Revising books • Bathing and resting • Searching for girls • Eating supper • Returning animals from the grazing land • Locking the house • Returning from supporting football • Going to work night duties like security	• Going to work at the bar • Taking supper • Returning from tailoring job • Revising books • Preparing tea • Washing plates •
9:00pm - 10:00pm	• Going to the bar • Going to socialize • Sleeping • Returning from movie rooms and going home • Checking on the sleeping children	• Sleeping • Covering their children • Night dancers	• Sleeping • Going to town to socialize • Going to movie rooms and supporting football • Going to dance • Studying preps • Hanging out with girls	• Sleeping • Returning home from work • Watching tv
11:00pm - 12:ooam	• Sleeping • socializing	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping

Gender Time series/roles analysis: FGD Adolescent Girls 15-17 Refugees, Adjumani

Time	men	Women	Boys	Girls	Remarks
5:00am-6:00am	• Waking up • Farming	• Waking up • Farming • Praying • Personal care • Sweeping the compound	• Waking up • Slashing the compound	• Waking up • Washing utensils • Sweeping the compound • Arranging the bed	Most times bathing is done by women only in the mornings men and boys only bath once a day
6:00am-7:00am	• Farming	• Farming • Preparing children to go to school • Fetching water	• Personal care • Going to school	• Preparing break fast • Fetching water • Going to school	
7:00am-8:00am	• Digging • Bush clearing • Grazing animals	• Domestic work • Fetching water	• Grazing animals	• Fetching water • Mopping the house • Fetching firewood	
8:00am-9:000am	• Carpentry work • Digging • Laying bricks • Burning charcoal	• Weeding • Domestic work • Fetching water	• Laying bricks • Burning charcoal • Digging •	• Washing utensils • Domestic works • Fetching water \	
9:00am-10am	• Bush clearing • Farming • Cutting timbers	• Fetching water • Fetching fire woods • Cooking • Weeding	• Nothing	• Cooking • Fetching water • Fetching firewoods	
10:00am-11:00am	• Laying bricks • Construction of houses • Eating breakfast •	• Weeding •	• Laying bricks	• Sweeping poultry house	
11:00am-12:00am	• Resting and leisure • Nothing	• Cooking food • Doing domestic work •	• Doing nothing • Feeding poultry	• Taking care of children • Washing clothes • Cooking •	
12:00am-1:00pm	• Farming • Grazing animals •	• Cooking • Collecting firewood • Fetching water	• Grazing animals	• Fetching water • Cooking •	
1:00pm-2:00pm	• Resting and leisure • Eating •	• Cooking •	• Resting	• Cooking	
2:00pm-3:00pm	• Eating and drinking • Resting • Giving drinking water to animals • Leisure • Farming	• Cooking • Farming • Eating •	• Resting • Playing games • Eating		
3:00pm-4:00pm	• Resting	• Personal care • Taking care of children • Resting	• Resting	• Babysitting	
5:00pm-6:00pm	• Nothing • Watering plants	• Trading • Going to the market	• Playing games	• Cooking • Fetching water	
6:00pm-7:00pm	• Eating and drinking • Personal care • Visiting friends	• Personal care • Eating and drinking	• Visiting friends	• Cooking	
7:00pm-8:00pm	• Eating • Drinking • Sleeping • Watching games	• Eating • Sleeping • Praying	• Watching televisions • Games • Sleeping	• Sleeping • Eating • Praying	
8:00 pm on wards	• Sleeping	• Sleeping	• Sleeping	• Sleeping	

Gender Time series/roles analysis: FGD Adolescent Girls 15-17, Moyo

TIME	MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS
06:00am-7:00am	• Waking up • Personal care • Going to the garden	• Waking up • Religious activities. • Personal care • Going to the garden.	• Waking up. • Personal care.	• Sweeping the compound. • Washing plates • Fetching water • Then we prepare to go to school. • We go to the garden during the holidays.
8:00am-9:00am	• Digging • Planting. • Weeding	• Digging • Planting	• Taking breakfast. • Taking animals for grazing	• Digging. • Caring for children • Taking goats for grazing. • Feeding chickens/poultry
10:00am-11:00am	• Coming back from the garden	• Digging • Weeding • Fetching firewood	• playing	• Coming back from the garden • Cooking • Fetching water • Washing plates
12:00pm-1:00pm	• Cooking • Serving food •	• Playing	• Washing plates	• Cooking • Eating • Serving food.
2:00pm-3:00pm	• Eating • resting	• Eating • Resting	• Eating • resting	• Bathing • Resting and sleeping.
4:00pm-5:00pm	• Own business	• Going back to the garden	• Playing with friends	• Doing holiday package
6:00pm-7:00pm	• Own business • Playing cards by the road side • Drinking alcohol with friends	• Coming back from the garden • Bathing • Caring for children	• Bringing goats back home from grazing. • Bathing	• Sweeping the compound • Bringing goats back home from grazing • Cooking • Bathing children
8:00pm-9:00pm	• Drinking • Eating khots with friends	• Eating with children • Chatting with the children	• Eating food. • Chatting with family	• Eating • Religious activities • Reading/ revising books
10:00pm-11:00pm	• Coming back home • Eating food • Going to bed	• Going to bed • Sleeping	• Going to bed • Sleeping.	• Spending time with family/leisure. • Reading/ revising books. • Going to bed/sleeping
12:00am-1:00am	• Sleeping and resting	• Sleeping and resting	• Sleeping and resting	• Resting and sleeping. •
2:00am-3:00am	• Sleeping and resting	• Sleeping and resting	• Sleeping and resting	• Resting and sleeping
4:00am-5:00am	• Sleeping and resting	• Sleeping and resting	• Sleeping and resting	• Resting and sleeping.
5:00 am-6:00 am	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping
7:00 am-8:00 am	• Sweeping the compound, taking animals for grazing	• Sweeping the compound, preparing breakfast	• Taking animals for grazing	• Washing plates
9:00am-10:00am	• garden	• garden	• garden	• Fetching water
11:00am-12:00pm	• garden	• garden	• garden	• Collecting firewood, cooking
1:00pm-2:00pm	• garden	• cooking	• eating	• Cooking, eating
3:00pm-4:00pm	• Eating, bathing	• Eating, garden	• Resting, revising	• resting
5:00pm-6:00pm	• resting	• Garden, , cooking supper	• Leisure, playing	• Helping the young ones to bath
7:00pm-8:00pm	• Bringing back the animals	• Cooking	• Bringing animals	• Cooking, resting
9:00pm-10:00pm	• Eating, sleeping	• Eating	• eating	• eating
11:00pm-12:00am	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping
1:0oam-2:00am	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping
3:00am-4:00am	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping	• sleeping

Gender Resource Analysis

Gender Resource Analysis Adult Females, osa village, Madi-Okollo

Resources (see examples listed above)	Access				Control				Remarks
	M	W	G	B	M	W	G	B	
Land	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Social and cultural perceptions
Livestock	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Men are more powerful
Farm tools	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	All are involved in the farm activities
Seeds	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	They are the most active in farms
Water source for farming	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	They are the ones who fetch water most
Transport means	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	They are the ones who use them most
Financial services	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Both need and use it
Information (TV, Radio)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	They are too expensive for women go buy.

Gender And Resources Analysis Adult Women, Adjumani

Resources	Access				Control				Remarks
	M	W	G	B	M	W	G	B	
Land	yes	Yes no	Yes no	yes	Yes	no	No	yes	Men are allowed to have access and control meanwhile women are only allowed to have access but not control over it over there times when they are allowed to have control too but it's rear
Livestock	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	All are allowed to have access and control over it
Farm tools	res	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	All are allowed to have access and control over it
Seeds and planting materials	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	All are allowed to have access and control over it
Water source	yes	yes	No	no	Yes	yes	No	no	Only the men and women are allowed to do this because the boys and girls are still young to manage water sources
Farming	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	Yes no	Yes No	Yes no	All are allowed to have access and control but that depends when the man of the house is there they can't take control over it
Transport means	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	All are allowed to have that and equally control it
Financial services	yes	Yes no	Yes no	Yes no	Yes	Yes no	No	no	All are allowed to have access and control but that depends on what they need the money for
Agric extension services	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	
SRHR services	yes	Yes	Yes no	Yes no	Yes	Yes no	Yes No	Yes no	Here all are allowed to have access and control too but that depends when the man of the house is there they can't take control over it
Phones	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	yes	All are allowed to have access and control over it
Radio/TV	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Yes	Yes no	Yes No	Yes no	The same applies here, they are allowed to have access and control but that depends when the man of the house is there they can't take control over it